The Record of Linji

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Prefect Wang, the Attendant Gentleman, together with the other officials, invited the Master to take the seat.

The Master ascended the hall and said: “Today this mountain monk has no choice but to accommodate human expectations and mount this seat. But according to the lineage of the patriarchs, in proclaiming the great matter, one simply cannot open one’s mouth; there is no place for you to set foot. Yet because the Attendant Gentleman has earnestly requested it, how could this mountain monk conceal the guiding principles of the school? Are there any capable generals here who can immediately deploy their ranks and unfurl their banners? Come forth before the assembly and present your proof.”

A monk asked, “What is the great meaning of the Buddhadharma?” The Master immediately gave a shout. The monk bowed. The Master said, “This monk is indeed fit to uphold an argument.”

A monk asked, “Whose tune does the Master sing? Whose school tradition does he inherit?” The Master said, “At Huangbo’s place, I asked three times and was struck three times.” When the monk hesitated, the Master immediately shouted. He then struck him and said, “Do not go driving pegs into empty space!”

A scriptural lecturer asked, “Do not the three vehicles and twelve divisions of the teachings illuminate Buddha-nature?” The Master said, “The wild grass has never been cleared away.” The lecturer said, “Could the Buddha deceive people?” The Master said, “Where is the Buddha?” The lecturer had no reply. The Master said, “Before the Attendant Gentleman, you would try to deceive this old monk! Withdraw at once, withdraw at once! Do not hinder the questions of others!”

The Master continued: “Today’s Dharma assembly is for the sake of the one great matter. Is there anyone else with a question? Ask quickly! The moment you open your mouth, you are already far from it. Why is this so? Have you not seen how the World-Honored One said, ‘The Dharma is apart from words; it belongs neither to causes nor to conditions’? Because you lack faith, there is all this entanglement today. I fear it may delay the Attendant Gentleman and the other officials, causing them to remain unaware of their Buddha-nature. Better that we withdraw for now.”

He gave a shout and said, “Those of little faith will never have an end to it. You have stood for a long time; take care!”

One day, when the Master arrived at He Prefecture, Prefect Wang, the Attendant Gentleman, invited him to take the seat. At that time Magu came forward and asked, “Of Great Compassion’s thousand hands and eyes, which is the true eye?” The Master said, “Of Great Compassion’s thousand hands and eyes, which is the true eye? Speak quickly, speak quickly!” Magu pulled the Master down from the seat and sat down himself. The Master stepped forward and said, “I beg your pardon.” When Magu hesitated, the Master likewise pulled him down from the seat and sat down himself. Magu then went out, and the Master descended from the seat.

The Master ascended the hall and said: “Within this lump of red flesh is the True Person of No Rank, who constantly goes in and out through the gateways of the faces of each one of you. Those who have not yet verified this—look, look!” At that time a monk came forth and asked, “What is the True Person of No Rank?” The Master stepped down from the Chan seat, seized him, and said, “Speak, speak!” When the monk hesitated, the Master released him and said, “What a dry shit-stick this True Person of No Rank is!” Then he returned to his quarters.

The Master ascended the hall. A monk came forward and bowed, and the Master immediately shouted. The monk said, “Old Reverend, it would be better not to stick out your head!” The Master said, “Tell me, where has it fallen?” The monk immediately shouted.

Another monk asked, “What is the great meaning of the Buddhadharma?” The Master immediately shouted, and the monk bowed. The Master said, “Tell me, was that shout good or not?” The monk said, “The bandit’s army has suffered a crushing defeat.” The Master said, “Where does the fault lie?” The monk said, “A second offense cannot be tolerated!” The Master immediately shouted.

That day, the head monks of the two halls met and simultaneously gave shouts. A monk asked the Master, “Are there still host and guest?” The Master said, “Host and guest are clearly distinct.” The Master then said, “If the assembly wishes to understand Linji’s sayings of host and guest, ask the two head monks in the hall.” He then descended from the seat.

The Master ascended the hall. A monk asked, “What is the great meaning of the Buddhadharma?” The Master raised his whisk. The monk immediately shouted. The Master immediately struck him.

Again, a monk asked, “What is the great meaning of the Buddhadharma?” The Master again raised his whisk. The monk immediately shouted. The Master likewise shouted. When the monk hesitated, the Master immediately struck him.

The Master then said: “Members of the assembly! One who acts for the Dharma does not shrink from losing body or life. During my twenty years with my former teacher Huangbo, I asked three times about the true great meaning of the Buddhadharma, and three times received his staff. It was like being brushed by a stalk of wormwood. Now I would again like to receive a blow of the staff. Who will administer it for me?” At that time a monk came forth from the assembly and said, “I can do it.” The Master picked up the staff and handed it to him. As the monk made to take it, the Master immediately struck him.

The Master ascended the hall. A monk asked, “What is the matter on the edge of the sword?” The Master said, “Trouble, trouble!” When the monk hesitated, the Master immediately struck him.

A monk asked, “When the practitioner in the stone chamber, treading the mill, forgets to move his feet, where does he go?” The Master said, “He sinks and drowns in a deep spring.”

The Master then said: “Whoever comes, I do not fail them; I always know where they come from. If they come in such a way, it is just like having lost it. If they do not come in such a way, they bind themselves without a rope. At all times, do not make confused calculations. Whether you understand or do not understand, both are mistaken. Though I state this plainly, I leave it to everyone under heaven to disparage me. You have stood for a long time; take care!”

The Master ascended the hall and said: “One person is on the summit of a solitary peak, with no road by which to emerge. Another is at the crossroads, with neither facing nor turning away. Which is in front, and which behind? I will not be Vimalakīrti, nor will I be Fu the Great Master. Take care!”

The Master ascended the hall and said: “One person has been on the road throughout kalpas without leaving home; another has left home but is not on the road. Which one deserves the offerings of humans and devas?” He then descended from the seat.

The Master ascended the hall. A monk asked, “What is the first phrase?” The Master said, “When the seal of the three essentials is opened, the vermilion mark is narrow;

before deliberation is allowed, host and guest are distinguished."

A monk asked, "What is the second phrase?" The Master said, "How could subtle understanding permit a question from Asaṅga? How could skillful means fail to bear the capacity to cut off the stream?"

A monk asked, "What is the third phrase?" The Master said, "Look at the puppets being manipulated above the booth: in all their pulling and tugging, there is someone within."

The Master further said: "A single phrase must contain the three mysterious gates; a single mysterious gate must contain the three essentials. There is authority and there is function. How do all of you understand this?" He then descended from the seat.

During the evening instruction, the Master addressed the assembly: "At times one takes away the person but not the circumstances; at times one takes away the circumstances but not the person. At times one takes away both person and circumstances; at times one takes away neither person nor circumstances."

A monk then asked, "What is taking away the person but not the circumstances?" The Master said, "The warming sun brings forth growth; brocade spreads across the ground. The infant's hanging hair is white as silk."

The monk said, "What is taking away the circumstances but not the person?" The Master said, "The king's command has gone forth throughout the land; beyond the frontier, the general has extinguished smoke and dust."

The monk said, "What is taking away both person and circumstances?" The Master said, "Communication with Bing and Fen is cut off; one dwells alone in a single region."

The monk said, "What is taking away neither person nor circumstances?" The Master said, "The king ascends the jeweled hall; the old country folk sing songs."

The Master then said: "Those who study the Buddhadharma nowadays must first seek genuine insight. If you attain genuine insight, birth and death will not stain you, and you will be free in going and staying. Do not seek what is extraordinary; the extraordinary will come of itself."

Followers of the Way! The virtuous teachers of old all had ways that surpassed others. Where this mountain monk points people, I want only that you not be deluded by others. Use it whenever you need to use it; do not hesitate further! Why are students today unable to attain this? Where lies their illness? Their illness lies in their lack of confidence in themselves. If your confidence in yourself is insufficient,

you will be busily carried along, following every circumstance, transformed by the myriad circumstances, and unable to be free. If you can stop the mind that chases after things thought after thought, you will be no different from the patriarchs and Buddhas. Do you wish to know the patriarchs and Buddhas? It is simply the one before you now who listens to the Dharma!"

Because students lack faith, they rush about seeking externally. Even if they obtain something, it is all merely the superior appearances of words and letters; they will never obtain the living intent of the patriarchs. Do not be mistaken, all you Chan worthies. If you do not encounter it now, then through myriad kalpas and countless lives you will revolve in the three realms, carried off by pleasant circumstances and born in the bellies of donkeys and oxen.

Followers of the Way! According to this mountain monk's view, there is no difference from Śākyamuni. In the many functions of this day, what is lacking? The spiritual radiance functioning through the six sense faculties has never ceased. If you can see in this way, you will simply be a person with nothing to do for your entire life. Worthy ones! The three realms are without security, like a burning house. This is no place for you to remain long. The demon of impermanence kills in an instant, making no distinction between noble and base, old and young.

If you wish to be no different from the patriarchs and Buddhas, simply do not seek outside. The pure light upon your single thought is the dharmakāya Buddha within your own house. The non-discriminating light upon your single thought is the sambhogakāya Buddha within your own house. The non-differentiating light upon your single thought is the nirmāṇakāya Buddha within your own house. These three kinds of body are the very person before you now who listens to the Dharma. It is only because you do not rush about seeking externally that they have this function.

According to the scholars of sūtras and treatises, the three kinds of body are taken as the ultimate standard. But according to this mountain monk's view, it is not so. These three kinds of body are names and words; they are also the three kinds of dependence. An ancient said, 'Bodies are established in reliance on meaning; lands are discussed on the basis of substance.' Clearly, the Dharma-nature body and Dharma-nature land are only reflections.

Worthy ones! You must recognize the one who manipulates these reflections. This is the source of all Buddhas and the home to which followers of the Way return everywhere. Your physical body of four great elements does not know how to speak or hear the Dharma; your spleen, stomach, liver, and gallbladder do not know how to speak or hear the Dharma; empty space does not know how to speak or hear the Dharma. What, then, knows how to speak and hear the Dharma? It is the one before

you, distinctly clear, without any form, shining alone. This is what knows how to speak and hear the Dharma.

If you see in this way, you will be no different from the patriarchs and Buddhas. Only do not allow interruption at any time; whatever meets your eye is it. It is merely because feelings arise and wisdom is obstructed, because thoughts change and the substance becomes divided, that you revolve in the three realms and undergo every kind of suffering. According to this mountain monk's view, there is nothing that is not profound and nothing that is not liberation.

Followers of the Way! Mind and dharmas are without form and pervade the ten directions. In the eye, it is called seeing; in the ear, hearing; in the nose, smelling fragrances; in the mouth, conversing; in the hands, grasping; in the feet, moving and running. Originally it is one bright essence, divided into the six harmonizing faculties. Once the one mind is absent, there is liberation wherever one is. Why does this mountain monk speak in this way? It is simply because you followers of the Way are ceaselessly chasing after things, unable to rest your minds, and have fallen into the idle devices and circumstances of the people of old.

Followers of the Way! According to this mountain monk's view, you should sit severing the heads of the sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya Buddhas. Bodhisattvas who have fulfilled the ten bhūmis are like hired laborers; those of equal and wondrous enlightenment are men wearing cangues and chains; arhats and pratyekabuddhas are like filth in a latrine; bodhi and nirvāṇa are like posts for tethering donkeys. Why is this so? It is simply because you followers of the Way have not realized the emptiness of the three asaṃkhyeya kalpas, and therefore have such obstacles. If one is a genuine person of the Way, one is never like this. One need only dissolve past karma in accordance with conditions and naturally wear one's clothes. Walk when you wish to walk, sit when you wish to sit, without a single thought seeking Buddhahood. Why is this so? An ancient said, 'If you seek Buddhahood through contrived action, Buddha is the great omen of birth and death.'

Worthy ones! Time is precious. Yet you merely intend to bustle about, studying Chan and studying the Way, recognizing names and phrases, seeking Buddha, seeking patriarchs, seeking spiritual friends. Do not miscalculate in this way. Followers of the Way! You have only one pair of parents—what else do you seek? Turn your own light back and look. An ancient said, 'Yajñadatta lost his head; when the mind that seeks it comes to rest, there is nothing to do.'

Worthy ones! Simply be ordinary; do not put on airs. There are some bald slaves who cannot distinguish good from bad, who see spirits and ghosts, point east and gesture west, delight in fair weather and delight in rain. All such people must repay

their debts; the day will come when, before old Yama, they swallow red-hot iron balls. Good men and women of respectable families are possessed by such wild-fox spirits and demons, and then make strange displays. Blind asses! The day will come when they demand money for their meals."

The Master addressed the assembly: "Followers of the Way! You must urgently seek genuine understanding, so that you may go freely throughout the world without being confused by these various spirits and demons. To have nothing to do is to be a person of honor. Simply do not fabricate anything; just be ordinary. You intend to seek elsewhere, leaning on others in search of something to do—you are mistaken!"

"You only intend to seek Buddhahood, but 'Buddha' is a name and a phrase. Do you recognize the one who runs about seeking? The Buddhas and patriarchs of the three times and ten directions all appeared only to seek the Dharma. Those who study the Way today likewise seek the Dharma; only upon obtaining the Dharma is it finished. Until they obtain it, they continue to revolve through the five paths of rebirth."

"What is the Dharma? The Dharma is the mind-Dharma. The mind-Dharma has no form; it pervades the ten directions and is functioning before your eyes. People lack sufficient faith in this, and so they grasp at names and phrases, seeking the meaning of the Buddha-Dharma in words and letters. How vastly distant they are!"

"Followers of the Way! What Dharma does this mountain monk teach? I teach the Dharma of the mind-ground. It can enter the ordinary and the sacred, the pure and the defiled, the true and the worldly. Yet it is not your true and worldly, ordinary and sacred states that can assign names to all that is true and worldly, ordinary and sacred. The true and worldly, ordinary and sacred cannot assign names to this person!"

"Followers of the Way! Take hold of it and use it, without attaching names to it. This is called the mysterious principle. What this mountain monk teaches differs from that of everyone else. Suppose Mañjuśrī or Samantabhadra were to appear before me, each manifesting a body and asking about the Dharma. The moment one says, 'Reverend Monk,' I have already discerned him. This old monk sits securely; when followers of the Way come to see me, I discern them all. Why is this so? Because my way of seeing is different: outwardly, I do not grasp at the ordinary or sacred; inwardly, I do not abide in the fundamental. Seeing through completely, I have no further doubts or errors."

The Master addressed the assembly: "Followers of the Way! In the Buddha-Dharma there is no place for contrived effort. It is simply ordinary and uneventful: defecating and urinating, putting on clothes and eating , and lying down when tired. Fools laugh at me, but the wise understand. The ancients said, 'To work at it outwardly is always the way of foolish, stubborn people.' Just be master wherever you are;

wherever you stand is true. When circumstances come, they cannot turn you about. Even if you have habitual tendencies from the past, including the karma of the five uninterrupted offenses, they naturally become the great ocean of liberation."

"Students today generally do not recognize the Dharma. They are like sheep that, upon encountering something, put it into their mouths; unable to distinguish servant from master, or guest from host, people of this kind enter the Way with distorted minds. They cannot enter a place of disturbance, yet call themselves true renunciants; in fact, they are worldly householders. One who has left home must be able to discern ordinary, genuine understanding: distinguish Buddha from demon, true from false, ordinary from sacred."

"If one can discern in this way, one is called a true renunciant. If one cannot distinguish demon from Buddha, one merely leaves one household to enter another; such a person is called a sentient being creating karma and has not yet earned the name of a true renunciant. Right now there is one in whom Buddha and demon are conjoined, inseparable like water and milk; like a royal goose drinking only the milk. Those followers of the Way with clear eyes strike down both demon and Buddha. If you love the sacred and hate the ordinary, you will sink and rise in the ocean of birth and death!"

A question was asked: "What are Buddha and demon?"

The Master said: "Where your mind gives rise to doubt in a single thought—that is demon. If you realize that all phenomena are unborn, that mind is like an illusion, and that there is not even a single speck or dharma, then everywhere is pure: that is Buddha. Yet Buddha and demon are the two states of defilement and purity. From this mountain monk's point of view, there is no Buddha and no sentient being, no past and no present. Those who attain, attain at once, without passing through stages of time. There is no cultivation or realization, no gain or loss; at all times there is no other Dharma. If there were a dharma surpassing this, I would say that it is like a dream or an illusion. Everything this mountain monk says is so."

"Followers of the Way! The solitary, lucid one now listening attentively before your eyes is not obstructed anywhere, pervades the ten directions, and is at ease within the three realms. Entering all circumstances, it cannot be turned about by their distinctions. In a single instant it penetrates the dharma realm: meeting a Buddha, it speaks of Buddha; meeting a patriarch, it speaks of a patriarch; meeting an arhat, it speaks of an arhat; meeting a hungry ghost, it speaks of a hungry ghost. It travels throughout lands everywhere, teaching and transforming sentient beings, yet never departs from a single thought. Everywhere is pure; its light penetrates the ten directions, and all phenomena are suchness."

“Followers of the Way! Today, sons and daughters of great resolve must know that originally there is nothing to do. It is only because you lack faith that, thought after thought, you run about seeking, abandoning your own head to seek another head, unable to rest. Like perfectly awakened bodhisattvas who enter the dharma realm and manifest bodies, you reject the ordinary and delight in the sacred within the Pure Land. People of this kind have not forgotten grasping and rejecting; minds of defilement and purity remain. The Chan school’s understanding is otherwise: right now, there are no stages of time at all. What this mountain monk says is merely medicine prescribed according to the illness; there is no real Dharma. If you see in this way, you are a true renunciant, worth ten thousand taels of gold consumed each day.”

“Followers of the Way! Do not casually allow teachers from every quarter to stamp your face with the claim, ‘I understand Chan; I understand the Way.’ Though they may debate as eloquently as a cascading river, they are all creating the karma of hell. If you are a genuine student of the Way, do not seek worldly faults. Urgently seek genuine understanding. Only when genuine understanding is completely clear will you be finished.”

A question was asked: “What is genuine understanding?”

The Master said: “You simply enter all states—ordinary and sacred, defiled and pure; enter all Buddha-lands, Maitreya’s tower, and Vairocana’s dharma realm. Everywhere, you see lands appear, abide, decay, and become empty. A Buddha appears in the world, turns the great Dharma wheel, and then enters nirvāṇa. Yet no appearance of coming or going is seen; seek for birth and death, and they cannot be found. Thus one enters the dharma realm of the unborn.”

“Traveling throughout lands everywhere, one enters the Lotus Treasury World and sees that all dharmas have the appearance of emptiness: none has any reality. Only the person of no reliance who hears the Dharma is the mother of all Buddhas; therefore, Buddhas arise from no reliance. If you awaken to no reliance, even Buddha cannot be attained. To see in this way is genuine understanding. Students who do not understand cling to names and phrases; obstructed by the names of ordinary and sacred, their Dharma-eye is hindered and cannot be clear.”

“The twelve divisions of the teachings are all spoken as indicative expressions. Students who do not understand them form interpretations from these indicative names and phrases. They are all dependent, falling into cause and effect, and cannot escape birth and death in the three realms. If you wish to be free in your coming and going amid birth and death, recognize now the one who hears the Dharma: without form or appearance, without root or basis, without dwelling place; lively and responsive, it employs all manner of devices, yet in its functioning it is

simply nowhere. Therefore, the more you seek it, the farther away it turns; the more you pursue it, the more you go astray. This is called the secret."

"Followers of the Way! Do not take this illusory companion for real; sooner or later it will return to impermanence. In this world, what are you seeking as liberation? Seek a mouthful of food, patch your robe, and pass the time; above all, seek out a true spiritual friend. Do not drift along in pursuit of pleasure. Time is precious; every thought is impermanent. Coarsely, you are pressed by earth, water, fire, and wind; subtly, by arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing—the four characteristics."

"Followers of the Way! Now you must recognize the four kinds of formless circumstances, so that you will not be tossed about by circumstances!"

A question was asked: "What are the four kinds of formless circumstances?"

The Master said: "When your mind doubts in a single thought, you are obstructed by earth. When your mind loves in a single thought, you are drowned by water. When your mind is angry in a single thought, you are burned by fire. When your mind rejoices in a single thought, you are carried away by wind. If you can discern this, you will not be turned by circumstances. Everywhere, you use circumstances: emerging in the east and vanishing in the west, emerging in the south and vanishing in the north, emerging in the center and vanishing at the edge, emerging at the edge and vanishing in the center. You tread on water as though it were land and tread on land as though it were water. Why is this so? Because you realize that the four great elements are like dreams and illusions."

"Followers of the Way! You who now hear the Dharma are not your four great elements; rather, you can use your four great elements. If you can see in this way, then your coming and going are free. From this mountain monk's point of view, do not reject any dharma. If you love the sacred, the sacred is merely the name 'sacred.'"

"Some students go to Mount Wutai seeking Mañjuśrī; they are already mistaken! There is no Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai. Do you wish to recognize Mañjuśrī? It is precisely your present functioning, never differing from beginning to end, never doubting anywhere: this is the living Mañjuśrī. The non-differentiating light of your mind in a single thought is everywhere the true Samantabhadra. Your mind in a single thought can release its own bonds; liberated wherever it is, this is Avalokiteśvara. In the Dharma of samādhi, they are mutually primary and secondary. When they emerge, they emerge all at once: one is three, and three are one. Only when you understand in this way are you fit to study the teachings."

The Master addressed the assembly: "Those who study the Way today must first trust themselves. Do not seek outwardly. You merely take up idle, dusty

circumstances and cannot distinguish wrong from right. Even Buddhas and patriarchs are matters found in the traces of the teachings. When someone raises a phrase, whether emerging from what is hidden or manifest, doubt immediately arises. You search everywhere, asking others, and become thoroughly busy and agitated."

"Sons and daughters of great resolve, do not pass your days merely discussing rulers and bandits, right and wrong, form and wealth, or idle chatter. Here, this mountain monk does not distinguish monastic from lay. Whoever comes, I recognize them all. Whatever place they may come from, any sounds, names, or written phrases are all dreams and illusions. I see only the person who rides upon circumstances; this is the mysterious principle of all Buddhas. The realm of Buddha cannot declare of itself, 'I am the realm of Buddha.'"

"It is this very person of no reliance who emerges by riding upon circumstances. If someone comes asking me for Buddha, I respond by emerging in the realm of purity. If someone asks me about bodhisattvas, I respond by emerging in the realm of compassion. If someone asks me about bodhi, I respond by emerging in the realm of pure wonder. If someone asks me about nirvāṇa, I respond by emerging in the realm of quiescence. Circumstances differ in ten thousand ways, but the person does not differ. Thus, forms appear in response to things, like the moon reflected in water."

"Followers of the Way! If you wish to accord with the Dharma, you must be people of great resolve. If you are weak and compliant, you cannot attain it. A vessel with cracks cannot hold clarified butter. Those of great capacity must not be deceived by others. Be master wherever you are; wherever you stand is true. Whatever comes, do not accept it. The moment a thought of doubt arises in you, demons enter your mind."

"When a bodhisattva doubts, the demon of birth and death finds an opening. Simply cease thoughts and seek no more outside. When things come, illuminate them. Just trust in the one functioning now; it has not a single affair. When a thought arises in your mind, it becomes the three realms; following conditions and being shaped by circumstances, it divides into the six sense objects."

"In your present functioning, what do you lack?"

"In a single instant, you enter the pure and the defiled, Maitreya's tower, and the lands of the Three Eyes. Traveling everywhere, you see only empty names."

A question was asked: "What are the lands of the Three Eyes?"

The Master said: “Together with you, I enter the land of pure wonder, put on garments of purity, and speak of the dharmakāya Buddha. Again, I enter the land of non-differentiation, put on garments of non-differentiation, and speak of the sambhogakāya Buddha. Again, I enter the land of liberation, put on garments of light, and speak of the nirmāṇakāya Buddha. These lands of the Three Eyes are all transformations dependent on conditions. According to the scholars of sūtras and treatises, the dharmakāya is taken as the basis, while the reward and transformation bodies are its functions.”

“From this mountain monk’s point of view, the dharmakāya cannot speak the Dharma. Therefore the ancients said, ‘The body is established in dependence on meaning; the land is discussed on the basis of essence.’ The Dharma-nature body and Dharma-nature land are clearly established teachings, dependent powers and dependent lands. An empty fist and yellow leaves are used to deceive small children. What juice are you seeking from dry bones amid thorns and caltrops?”

“Outside mind there is no Dharma, and inwardly nothing can be obtained. What are you seeking? You people everywhere say, ‘There is cultivation and realization.’ Do not be mistaken. Even if there is something attained through cultivation, it is all karma of birth and death.”

“You say, ‘The six perfections and the myriad practices are cultivated together.’ In my view, all of this is creating karma. Seeking Buddha and seeking Dharma are the karma of creating hell; seeking bodhisattvas is likewise creating karma. Reading sūtras and studying teachings are likewise creating karma.”

Buddhas and patriarchs are people with nothing to do. To regard the conditioned and defiled, or the unconditioned and undefiled, as pure karma—there are certain blind, shaven-headed fellows who, having eaten their fill, sit in Chan meditation and contemplative practice. They seize hold of the leaking of thoughts, refusing to let them arise; they loathe noise and seek stillness. This is the dharma of non-Buddhist paths. A patriarch said: “If you abide in mind and watch for stillness, raise the mind to look outward, gather the mind inward to clarify it, or concentrate the mind and enter samādhi, all such things are contrivances.”

“You who are now listening to the Dharma in this way—how do you intend to cultivate it, realize it, or adorn it? It is not something to be cultivated, nor something that can be adorned. If it could be adorned, then all things could adorn it. Do not be mistaken.”

Followers of the Way! You take the words from the mouths of these teachers to be the true Way, imagining that such good spiritual friends are inconceivable. I am an ordinary person and do not dare presume to measure those venerable elders. You

blind fools! All your lives you merely hold such views, disappointing those two eyes of yours, cold and stiff as a colt standing on frozen ice.

I do not dare slander good spiritual friends, for fear of creating karmic speech. Followers of the Way! Only a great good spiritual friend dares to disparage Buddha and patriarchs, judge right and wrong throughout the world, reject the teachings of the Tripiṭaka, revile these little children, and seek people amid favorable and adverse circumstances. Therefore, during twelve years, I sought a karmic nature, but could not find even an amount as small as a mustard seed. If one is like a Chan master who is a newly married bride, one immediately fears being driven from the monastery, denied food, left uneasy and unhappy. Since ancient times, when predecessors went everywhere and people did not trust them, and they were expelled, only then was it known that they were precious. If people everywhere readily approve of you, what use are you? Thus, when a lion roars, the jackals' brains split open.

Followers of the Way! Everywhere people say, "There is a Way that can be cultivated, and a Dharma that can be realized." What Dharma do you say is to be realized? What Way is to be cultivated? What is lacking in your present functioning? What needs repairing? Young novice masters do not understand and simply believe these fox spirits and goblins, allowing them to speak words that bind people. They say, "Only when principle and practice accord, and one guards the three karmas, can one become a Buddha." Such talk is like fine spring rain.

An ancient said, "When you meet a person who has realized the Way on the road, first of all, do not speak of the Way." Thus it is said: "If one cultivates the Way but the Way does not proceed, myriad deviant states vie to arise. When the sword of wisdom appears, not a single thing remains; before the bright end is revealed, the dark end becomes clear." Therefore, an ancient said, "Ordinary mind is the Way."

Virtuous ones! What are you seeking? The person of the Way without reliance, now before your very eyes listening to the Dharma, is vividly clear and has never lacked anything. If you wish to be no different from the patriarchs and Buddhas, simply see in this way and do not doubt or stray. When mind after mind is not different, this is called a living patriarch. If the mind differs, then nature and appearances are separate. Because the mind is not different, nature and appearances are not separate."

A monk asked, "What is the place where mind after mind is not different?"

The Master said, "The moment you intended to ask, it was already different; nature and appearances have each become distinct. Followers of the Way, do not be mistaken. All worldly and supramundane dharmas have no self-nature, nor do they possess a nature of arising. There are only empty names, and the names themselves

are empty. You merely take these idle names as real—this is a great mistake. Even if such things exist, they are all realms dependent on change."

"There are dependencies on bodhi, nirvāṇa, liberation, the three bodies, objects and wisdom, bodhisattvas, and Buddhas.... What are you seeking amid lands dependent on change? Even the teachings of the three vehicles and twelve divisions are merely old paper for wiping away filth. Buddha is an illusory transformation body; patriarchs are old bhikṣus. Were you not born of your mother? If you seek Buddha, you will be seized by the demon of Buddha. If you seek patriarchs, you will be bound by the demon of patriarchs. Any seeking is suffering; better to have nothing to do. There are some shaven-headed bhikṣus who tell students, 'Buddha is ultimate; only after cultivating through three great asaṃkhyeya kalpas, when the fruition is complete, does one finally realize the Way.'"

Followers of the Way! If you say that Buddha is ultimate, why did he lie on his side and die beneath the twin śāla trees outside the city of Kuśinagara eighty years later? Where is the Buddha now? Clearly, he is no different from us in birth and death. If you say that the thirty-two marks and eighty excellent characteristics are Buddha, then a wheel-turning sage king ought to be a Tathāgata. Clearly, these are illusions. An ancient said: "The Tathāgata manifests bodily marks

to accord with worldly sentiments. Fearing that people might give rise to annihilationist views, he provisionally established empty names, speaking provisionally of thirty-two marks; the eighty characteristics are likewise empty sounds. A body with marks is not the body of awakening; without marks is the true form." You say that Buddha's six supernormal powers are inconceivable.

All devas, immortals, asuras, and powerful ghosts also possess spiritual powers; are they therefore Buddhas? Followers of the Way, do not be mistaken! When, for example, an asura battles Śakra, lord of the devas, and is defeated, he leads his eighty-four thousand retinue into the hole of a lotus fiber and hides there. Is he therefore a sage? All the examples I have given are karmic powers and dependent powers.

But the six supernormal powers of a Buddha are not like this: entering the realm of forms, he is not deluded by forms; entering the realm of sounds, he is not deluded by sounds; entering the realm of odors, he is not deluded by odors; entering the realm of tastes, he is not deluded by tastes; entering the realm of touch, he is not deluded by touch; entering the dharma realm, he is not deluded by dharmas. Thus he realizes that the six kinds of forms, sounds, odors, tastes, touch, and dharmas are all empty appearances and cannot bind this person of the Way without reliance. Though he has the leaky substance of the five aggregates, he is one who exercises spiritual powers upon the earth.

Followers of the Way! The true Buddha is without form; the true Dharma is without marks. You merely fashion appearances upon illusory transformations. Even if you obtain something in this way, it is all fox spirits and goblins, not the true Buddha; it is the view of non-Buddhist paths. A true student of the Way does not take hold of Buddha, bodhisattvas, or arhats, nor of the special excellence of the three realms. He is utterly free and independent, not constrained by things. Though heaven and earth overturn, I do not doubt.

When the Buddhas of the ten directions appear before him, not one thought of joy arises. When the hells of the three lower realms suddenly appear, not one thought of fear arises. Why is this so? I see all dharmas as empty appearances: when they change, they exist; when they do not change, they do not exist. The three realms are mind-only; all phenomena are consciousness-only. Since they are dreams, illusions, flowers in empty space, why trouble to grasp at them?

Only the follower of the Way now before you, listening to the Dharma, enters fire without being burned, enters water without drowning, enters the hells of the three lower realms as though strolling through a garden, and enters among hungry ghosts and animals without undergoing karmic retribution. Why is this so? There are no dharmas to reject. If you love sages and hate ordinary beings, you will sink and rise in the sea of birth and death. Afflictions exist because of mind; without mind, what can afflictions constrain? Without laboring to discriminate and grasp at appearances, you naturally attain the Way in an instant. If you intend to run about learning from one household after another, you will ultimately remain in birth and death through three asaṃkhyeya kalpas. Better to have nothing to do and sit cross-legged by the corner of a bed in the Chan monastery.

Followers of the Way! When students come from all directions and host and guest have met, there is then a phrase by which to discern the good spiritual friend before them.

The student puts forth some expedient phrase or device and thrusts it past the corner of the good spiritual friend's mouth, to see whether he recognizes it. If the good spiritual friend recognizes it as an object, he takes it up and throws it into a pit. The student then acts ordinarily and asks the good spiritual friend for a phrase. The good spiritual friend again seizes it. The student says, "Excellent! This is a great good spiritual friend." Then he says, "You greatly fail to recognize good and bad."

If the good spiritual friend brings out an object and displays it before the student, and the other person discerns it, takes mastery in every way, and is not deluded by the object, the good spiritual friend then reveals half his body, and the student gives a shout. The good spiritual friend again enters into all manner of differentiating verbal devices and maneuvers. The student says, "You old shaven slave who cannot

distinguish good from bad!" The good spiritual friend sighs and says, "A true follower of the Way."

Some good spiritual friends in various places cannot distinguish wrong from right. When students come asking about bodhi and nirvāṇa, the three bodies, objects and wisdom, the blind teacher explains these things to them. When the student reviles him, he takes up a stick and beats the student, saying that he has no manners. Such a spiritual friend himself has no eyes and must not be angered by the other. There are some shaven-headed fools who cannot distinguish good from bad and merely point east and gesture west, praising fine weather and rain, lanterns and pillars.

Look and see how many hairs they have in their eyebrows. This is a matter of conditions and capacities; students do not understand and immediately become mentally deranged. All such people are fox spirits, goblins, and demons. Good students sneer and laugh at them, saying, "These blind old shaven fools mislead all the people in the world."

Followers of the Way! Those who leave home must above all study the Way. As for this mountain monk, in earlier days I applied myself to the Vinaya and also investigated the sūtras and treatises. Later I realized that these were medicines for helping the world, expository teachings that merely indicate and reveal; so I cast them all aside at once and went in search of the Way, consulting Chan masters. Later, when I encountered a great good spiritual friend, the eye of the Way became clear. Only then did I recognize the old monks throughout the world and know their rightness and wrongness. One is not born already knowing; one must investigate, train, and polish oneself, until one day one awakens on one's own.

Followers of the Way! If you wish to gain a view in accord with the Dharma, do not let others delude you. Whatever you encounter, inwardly or outwardly, kill it. Encounter Buddha—kill Buddha. Encounter a patriarch—kill the patriarch. Encounter an arhat—kill the arhat. Encounter your parents—kill your parents. Encounter your relatives—kill your relatives. Only then do you attain liberation. Do not be constrained by things; penetrate through them and be free. Among followers of the Way in various places, none has emerged without relying on things.

Here, this mountain monk strikes things from the very beginning: if they emerge from the hands, I strike the hands; if they emerge from the mouth, I strike the mouth; if they emerge from the eyes, I strike the eyes. There has not yet been one who emerged independently. All are caught up in the idle devices and objects of the ancients. This mountain monk has not a single dharma to give people; I merely cure illness and untie bonds.

You followers of the Way in various places, try to emerge without relying on things. I want to discuss it with you! In ten years or five, not a single person appears. All are

clinging to grass and leaves—spirits of bamboo and wood, fox spirits and goblins—biting wildly at every lump of dung. Blind fools! You vainly consume the offerings of faith from the ten directions, claiming, “I am one who has left home,” while holding such views. I tell you: there is no Buddha, no Dharma, no cultivation, and no realization. What are you seeking as you run about from one household to another? Blind fools! You put a head on top of your head. What do you lack?

Followers of the Way! What you are presently using is no different from the patriarchs and Buddhas. You simply do not trust this and seek outside. Do not be mistaken! Outside there is no Dharma, and inwardly it cannot be obtained either. Rather than taking the words from this mountain monk’s mouth, go rest and have nothing to do. Do not continue what has already arisen; do not allow what has not yet arisen to arise. This surpasses ten years of wandering on pilgrimage.

In this mountain monk’s view, there are not so many kinds of things. I simply wear clothes, eat food, and pass the time with nothing to do. You who come from various places all have intentions: seeking Buddha, seeking Dharma, seeking liberation, seeking to leave the three realms. Foolish people! If you want to leave the three realms, where will you go? Buddhas and patriarchs are names and phrases that bind you. Do you wish to know the three realms? They are not apart from the mind-ground that is now listening to the Dharma.

When a single thought of greed arises in your mind, that is the desire realm. When a single thought of anger arises, that is the form realm. When a single thought of ignorance arises, that is the formless realm. They are furnishings within your own house. The three realms do not themselves say, ‘We are the three realms.’ It is the person before you, the follower of the Way who vividly illuminates all things and appraises the world, who gives the three realms their names.

Virtuous ones! The material body of the four great elements is impermanent. Even the spleen, stomach, liver, gallbladder, hair, fur, nails, and teeth reveal only the empty appearances of all dharmas. Where a single thought of your mind can rest is called the bodhi tree. Where a single thought of your mind cannot rest is called the tree of ignorance. Ignorance has no abiding place; ignorance has neither beginning nor end. If, thought after thought, your mind cannot rest, you climb the tree of ignorance and enter the six realms and four modes of birth, wearing fur and bearing horns.

If you can rest, this is the realm of the pure body. When not a single thought arises, you ascend the bodhi tree. There are spiritual powers and transformations in the three realms, mind-born transformation bodies, Dharma joy and Chan delight, and bodily light shining of itself. Think of clothing, and fine silks in a thousand layers

appear; think of food, and a hundred flavors are fully provided. There are no further sudden illnesses. Bodhi has no abiding place; therefore, there is nothing to attain.

Followers of the Way! What is there for a true man of strength to doubt? Who is it that is presently making use of these functions? Seize them and use them; do not attach names to them. This is called the mysterious principle. If you see in this way, do not disparage any dharma. An ancient said: “The mind follows as it turns amid the myriad circumstances; where it turns, its functioning is truly profound. Recognize your nature as you follow the current; then there is neither joy nor sorrow.”

Followers of the Way! According to the understanding of the Chan school, whether alive or dead, everything proceeds in an orderly way. Those who investigate and study must be exceedingly careful. When host and guest meet, there is an exchange of words. One may manifest a form in response to circumstances, employ the whole functioning, wield expedient devices of delight and anger, reveal half the body, ride a lion, or ride the king of elephants.

Suppose there is a genuine student who first gives a shout and brings forth a basin of glue. If the good spiritual friend cannot distinguish that it is an object, he begins posturing upon that object. The student then shouts. The former will not let go. This is an incurable disease that has entered the vital organs; it is called “the guest examines the host.”

Or perhaps the good spiritual friend does not bring forth an object, but, following the student’s question, immediately takes it away. The student, having been deprived of it, clings to it desperately and will not let go. This is called “the host examines the guest.” Or a student may present a realm of purity before the good spiritual friend. The good spiritual friend recognizes it as a realm, grasps it, and throws it into a pit. The student says, “An excellent good spiritual friend!” The teacher then says, “Bah! You do not know good from bad.” The student thereupon bows. This is called “the host examines the host.”

Or a student may appear before the good spiritual friend wearing a cangue and chains. The good spiritual friend adds another cangue and chain, and the student is delighted. Neither distinguishes what is what; this is called “the guest examines the guest.”

Virtuous ones! All the cases I have just presented are for distinguishing māras and selecting what is different, so as to know the deviant and the correct.

Followers of the Way! The true matter is exceedingly difficult, and the Buddhadharma is profound and mysterious. You may gain a rough understanding of it. All day long I explain it fully to you, yet students pay no attention at all. They tread

over it beneath their feet thousands and tens of thousands of times, darkly and blindly, without a single form or outline; yet it is distinctly and solitarily luminous. Students do not have sufficient faith in it, so they form interpretations from names and phrases. Reaching fifty years of age, they merely go from house to house carrying a corpse, shouldering a burden as they wander through the world, until the day comes when they must pay for their straw sandals.

Virtuous ones! When I say that there is no dharma outside, students fail to understand and immediately interpret this inwardly. Then they lean against a wall and sit, holding the tongue against the palate, remaining clear and still without moving, and take this to be the Buddhadharma of the patriarchal school. What a grave error! If you take an unmoving realm of purity to be correct, then you recognize ignorance as your master. An ancient said, “The deep pit of dark stillness is truly terrifying.” This is precisely what is meant.

If you take what moves to be the Way, then all grasses and trees can move; would they therefore be the Way? Thus what moves belongs to the element of wind, and what does not move belongs to the element of earth. Neither movement nor stillness has any self-nature. If you try to seize it in movement, it stands in stillness; if you try to seize it in stillness, it stands in movement. It is like a fish in a hidden spring, stirring the waves and leaping by itself.

Virtuous ones! Movement and stillness are two kinds of realms. It is the person of the Way who relies on nothing who makes use of movement and makes use of stillness. When students come here from various places, I assess them according to three kinds of capacity. When those of middling or lesser capacity come, I take away their realm but do not remove their dharma. When those of middling or superior capacity come, I take away both realm and dharma. When those of the highest capacity come, I take away neither realm, dharma, nor person. If someone comes with understanding beyond the ordinary standards, I employ the whole functioning here, without assessing capacity.

Virtuous ones! At this point, where the student exerts effort admits no breath of air; like a spark from flint or a flash of lightning, it has already passed. If the student’s eyes are fixed and move, there is no connection. To formulate a thought is to miss it; to stir a thought is to go astray. Whoever understands does not depart from what is immediately before them.

Virtuous ones! You carry a bag and bowl, bearing a dung-basket as you go from house to house seeking the Buddha and seeking the Dharma. Do you recognize the one who is now running about in this way? Lively and vital, it simply has no root or stem. It cannot be gathered together, nor can it be scattered; seek it, and it turns ever farther away; do not seek it, and it is right before your eyes, its numinous voice

filling your ears. If people do not believe this, they will labor in vain for a hundred years.

Followers of the Way! In a single instant one enters the Flower Treasury World, enters Vairocana's land, enters the land of liberation, enters the land of spiritual powers, enters the land of purity, enters the dharma realm, enters defilement and purity, enters the ordinary and the sacred, enters hungry ghosts and animals. Search everywhere, and nowhere is there birth and death—only empty names. Illusory flowers in empty space need not be grasped. Gain and loss, right and wrong: let them all go at once.

Followers of the Way! My Buddhadharma has been transmitted with complete authenticity. From Chan Master Magu, Chan Master Danxia, Chan Master Daoyi, and Chan Master Shitou of Mount Lu who dragged stones, it has traveled throughout the land. No one believed it; all raised slander. Chan Master Daoyi's functioning was wholly single and without admixture. Among three hundred or five hundred students, not one saw his meaning.

Chan Master of Mount Lu freely and genuinely employed favorable and adverse circumstances; students could not fathom his limits and were all bewildered. Chan Master Danxia played with the pearl, concealing and revealing it; all who came to him were scolded. Magu's functioning was as bitter as Huangbo's, and few could approach it. Shigong's functioning sought people at the point of an arrow, and all who came were afraid. My functioning today truly brings about both formation and destruction.

I play with miraculous transformations and enter every kind of realm. Wherever I am, there is nothing to do; circumstances cannot change me. Whenever someone comes seeking, I immediately go out to look at him. He does not recognize me, so I put on various garments. The student forms an interpretation and enters wholly into my words and phrases. How pitiful! These blind bald men without eyes take the garments I wear and identify blue, yellow, red, and white. When I remove them and enter a realm of purity, the student sees it and immediately gives rise to delight and desire. When I remove even that, the student loses his bearings and runs about wildly, saying, "I have no garments." I say to him, "Do you recognize the person who wears the garments?" Suddenly he turns his head and recognizes me.

Virtuous ones! Do not recognize the garments. Garments cannot move; it is people who wear garments. There are garments of purity, garments of the unborn, garments of bodhi, garments of nirvāṇa, garments of the patriarchs, and garments of the Buddhas.

Virtuous ones! All sounds, names, and written phrases are transformations of garments. They are stirred up from the sea of breath at the navel wheel, and the

teeth strike together to form their verbal meanings. Clearly know that they are illusions.

Virtuous ones! Outwardly, one gives rise to the karma of sound and speech; inwardly, one manifests mental factors. Whenever thought gives rise to notions, all these are garments. You merely take the garments worn by that one as true understanding. Even if you pass through kalpas as numerous as dust motes, you will only comprehend the garments. You will revolve within the three realms and undergo the cycle of birth and death. Better than this is to have nothing to do. We meet without recognizing one another; we speak together without knowing one another's name.

Students today fail because they take names to be understanding. They copy the words of dead old men into large notebooks, wrap them in three or five layers, and do not let anyone see them. They call this the mysterious principle and regard it as something precious. What a great mistake, you blind fellows! What juice are you seeking from dry bones? There are some who do not know good from bad and derive interpretations from the teachings, weighing and discussing them until they become attached to verbal meanings.

It is like putting a lump of dung into one's mouth and then spitting it out for someone else, like ordinary people passing along an oral message. One's whole life is wasted in vain. They say, "I have left home," but when questioned about the Buddhadharma, they immediately fall silent and have no words. Their eyes are like blackened holes, their mouths like the eaves of a flat roof. Persons of this sort, when Maitreya appears in the world, will be transferred to another world and sent to hell to suffer.

Virtuous ones! What are you rushing about seeking in every direction? Under the soles of your feet, there is no Buddha to seek, no Way to accomplish, no dharma to attain. The Buddha of form that you seek outside is not like you. If you wish to know your original mind, it is neither united with nor separate from you.

Followers of the Way! The true Buddha is without form, the true Way is without substance, and the true Dharma is without characteristics. These three merge and unite in one place; because they cannot be distinguished, they are called sentient beings of confused karmic consciousness.

A monk asked, "What are the true Buddha, true Dharma, and true Way? I beg you to bestow instruction."

The master said, "Buddha is the purity of mind. Dharma is the luminosity of mind. Way is the pure light that encounters no obstruction anywhere. The three are one; all are empty names, without any real existence. For a genuine practitioner of the

Way, mind continues without interruption from thought to thought. Since Bodhidharma came from the West, he sought only a person who would not be deceived by others. Later he encountered the Second Patriarch, and with one word the matter was settled; only then did he know that his former efforts had been in vain. What I see today is no different from that of the patriarchs and Buddhas. If you attain it in the first phrase, you may become a teacher to patriarchs and Buddhas. If you attain it in the second phrase, you may become a teacher to humans and devas. If you attain it in the third phrase, you cannot save even yourself."

A monk asked, "What was the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" The master said, "If there were a meaning, he could not save even himself."

The monk said, "If there was no meaning, how did the Second Patriarch receive the Dharma?" The master said, "To attain is not to attain."

The monk said, "Since it is not attained, what is the meaning of this 'not attained'?"

The master said, "Because your mind that races about seeking everywhere cannot rest, the patriarch said, 'Bah, you man of strength! Carrying your head, you seek your head.' At those words, turn the light inward and examine yourself. Seek nothing else. Know that your body and mind are no different from the patriarchs and Buddhas. Then, right then and there, there is nothing to do; only this is called attaining the Dharma. Virtuous ones, I have no choice at present but to speak provisionally and utter much impure nonsense. But do not be mistaken."

According to what I see, there are truly not so many different kinds of principles. Use it when you need it; when you do not need it, stop. When people in various places speak of the six perfections and myriad practices as Buddhadharma, I say these are methods of adornment and Buddhist ceremonial practices, not Buddhadharma itself.

Even fasting and observing the precepts, carrying oil without spilling it—if the Dharma eye is not clear, one must repay one's debts; the day will come when one must pay for one's food. Why is this so? If one enters the Way without penetrating principle, one will return to receive offerings in vain. Even if one lives to eighty-one, one is no better than a tree that does not grow ears. Even dwelling alone on a solitary peak, eating one morning meal, sitting constantly without lying down, and practicing the Way through the six periods of the day—all these are people creating karma.

Even giving away one's head, eyes, marrow, brains, kingdom, cities, wife, children, elephants, horses, and the seven precious treasures—views such as these all bring suffering to body and mind and thereby summon painful results. Better than this is to have nothing to do, wholly single and without admixture. Even bodhisattvas who

have fulfilled the ten bhūmis seek traces of this person of the Way but cannot find them at all. Therefore the devas rejoice, earth spirits support his feet, and all Buddhas throughout the ten directions praise him. Why is this? Because the functioning of the person now listening to the Dharma leaves no trace.

A monk asked, “Great Penetrating Wisdom-Victory Buddha sat in the place of practice for ten kalpas, yet the Buddhadharma did not appear before him and he could not attain Buddhahood. What is the meaning of this? I beg the master to instruct me.”

The master said, “Great Penetration means oneself: wherever one is, one comprehends that the myriad dharmas are without nature and without characteristics; this is called Great Penetration. Wisdom-Victory means that in all circumstances one is free of doubt and obtains not a single dharma; this is called Wisdom-Victory. Buddha means that the mind is pure, luminous, and penetrates the dharma realm; thus it is called Buddha. Sitting in the place of practice for ten kalpas means the ten perfections. The Buddhadharma not appearing before one means that Buddha is originally unborn and dharma is originally unceasing; how could there be a further appearing before one? Not attaining Buddhahood means that a Buddha should not become a Buddha again. An ancient said, ‘The Buddha is always in the world, yet is not stained by worldly dharmas.’”

Followers of the Way! If you wish to become a Buddha, do not follow the myriad things. When mind arises, all dharmas arise; when mind ceases, all dharmas cease. When not a single thought arises, the myriad dharmas are without fault. In worldly and supramundane matters, there is neither Buddha nor Dharma. They neither appear before you nor have ever been lost. Whatever there may be is all merely names, words, and phrases—provisional remedies prescribed to guide children according to their ailments, expressed through names and phrases. Yet names and phrases do not name themselves. It is precisely the bright, numinous, discerning, aware, hearing, knowing, and illuminating presence before you that assigns all names and phrases. Worthy ones! Only by committing the five acts of immediate retribution can one attain liberation.

A questioner asked, “What are the five acts of immediate retribution?” The Master said, “Killing one’s father, harming one’s mother, drawing blood from the Buddha’s body, disrupting the harmonious saṅgha, and burning sūtras and images—these are the five acts of immediate retribution. You ask, ‘What is the father?’ Ignorance is the father. When, in a single thought of mind, you seek the place where arising and ceasing occur but cannot find it, and it is like an echo answering emptiness, with nothing to do wherever you are—this is called killing the father.”

The questioner asked, “What is the mother?” The Master said, “Craving and attachment are the mother. When, in a single thought of mind, you enter the desire realm and seek that craving and attachment, you see only the empty characteristics of all dharmas and are unattached everywhere—this is called harming the mother.”

The questioner asked, “What is drawing blood from the Buddha’s body?” The Master said, “When, within the pure dharma realm, you do not give rise to even a single thought of interpretive understanding, then everywhere is darkness. This is drawing blood from the Buddha’s body.”

The questioner asked, “What is disrupting the harmonious saṅgha?” The Master said, “When, in a single thought of mind, you directly penetrate the knots of affliction and make them like empty space, with nothing on which to depend—this is disrupting the harmonious saṅgha.”

The questioner asked, “What is burning sūtras and images?” The Master said, “See that causes and conditions are empty, that mind is empty and dharmas are empty. When a single thought makes a decisive break and there is utterly nothing to do, this is burning sūtras and images. Worthy ones! If you understand in this way, you will be free from obstruction by the names of ordinary beings and sages. Yet in a single thought you give rise to a real understanding merely on the basis of an empty fist and a pointing finger; amid the faculties, objects, and dharmas, you vainly fabricate strange notions, belittle yourselves, and retreat timidly, saying, ‘I am an ordinary being; that person is a sage.’”

You bald fools! What urgent matter of life and death is there? You put on another’s lion skin, yet cry like foxes. You men of great resolve do not breathe the air of great men. You refuse to trust what is in your own house and only seek outside, relying on the idle names and phrases of the ancients, leaning on yin to gamble for yang, unable to attain direct realization. Whenever you encounter circumstances, you become entangled; whenever you encounter objects, you cling to them. Delusion arises at every contact, and you yourselves have no settled standard.

Followers of the Way! Do not cling to what this mountain monk says. Why not? What I say has no basis; it is only a temporary painting of empty space, like the metaphor of a painted image in colors.

Followers of the Way! Do not take Buddha as the ultimate. To my view, he is like a privy hole. Bodhisattvas and arhats are all things that bind people in shackles. Thus Mañjuśrī, sword in hand, killed Gautama, and Aṅgulimāla, knife in hand, harmed the Śākya. Followers of the Way! No Buddha can be obtained. Even the traces of the teachings of the three vehicles, the five natures, and the perfect and sudden teaching are all temporary remedies for particular ailments; there is no real dharma

in them. If there is anything, it is merely a likeness: signs set forth as pathways and words arranged in sequence. That is all there is to say.

Followers of the Way! There is a kind of bald fellow who applies effort inwardly, intending to seek a supramundane dharma. He is utterly mistaken! If a person seeks Buddha, that person loses Buddha. If a person seeks the Way, that person loses the Way. If a person seeks the patriarchs, that person loses the patriarchs. Worthy ones, do not be mistaken! I do not value your understanding of sūtras and treatises. Nor do I value your being kings or great ministers. Nor do I value your eloquence like a rushing river. Nor do I value your intelligence and wisdom. I want only your genuine understanding.

Followers of the Way! Even understanding a hundred collections of sūtras and treatises is not as good as being a master with nothing to do. If you have understanding, you will disparage others and become a victory-seeking asura. Attachment to self and ignorance create the karma that prolongs hell. Bhikshu Śubhakarasiṃha understood the twelve divisions of the teachings, yet fell bodily into hell, and the great earth could not contain him. Better to be without affairs and rest! When hungry, eat; when sleepy, close your eyes. Foolish people laugh at me, but the wise understand.

Followers of the Way! Do not seek within words and letters. When the mind stirs, it grows weary and labors; inhaling cold air is of no benefit. Better to realize in a single thought that dependent arising is unborn, thereby transcending bodhisattvas who study the provisional teachings of the three vehicles.

Worthy ones! Do not let your days pass in vain. In former times, before I had any realization, all was dark and murky. Time could not be wasted; my belly was hot and my mind anxious as I ran about seeking the Way. Later, when I gained strength, I arrived at where I am today and speak such words with you followers of the Way. I urge you all: do not live merely for clothing and food. See how easily this life passes; a good spiritual friend is difficult to encounter, appearing only as rarely as the udumbara flower.

You have heard in various places that there is an old fellow named Linji, and so you intend to challenge him with questions. Yet before you can utter a word, this mountain monk puts his whole functioning into action. The students open their eyes wide, but their mouths cannot move; bewildered, they do not know how to answer me. I say to them, “When dragons and elephants trample, donkeys cannot bear it.” Wherever you are, you point to your chests and tap your ribs, claiming that you understand Chan and understand the Way; but when three or two of you come here, you can do nothing.

Alas! You carry this body and mind about everywhere, flapping your two lips, deceiving householders; the day will come when you receive iron rods. You are no true renunciants; all of you are gathered into the realm of asuras. As for the Way of ultimate principle, it is not through disputation that one seeks to stir things up, sounding out forcefully in order to crush non-Buddhist paths. In the transmission from Buddha to patriarch, there is no other meaning. Whatever verbal teachings there may be fall within provisional methods: the three vehicles, the five natures, human and heavenly cause and effect, and teachings of the perfect and sudden kind. Yet this is not so either: even the youth Sudhana did not seek anything beyond this.

Worthy ones! Do not use your minds wrongly. The great sea does not retain corpses. Yet you shoulder this burden and intend to roam the world, erecting the obstruction of views yourselves and hindering your own minds. When the sun rises and clouds are absent, its beauty illuminates the heavens everywhere. When there is no film over the eye, there are no flowers in empty space.

Followers of the Way! If you wish to accord with the Dharma, simply do not give rise to doubt. Expanded, it fills the dharma realm; contracted, not even a thread or hair is established. Distinct and solitary in its brightness, it has never lacked anything. When the eye does not see and the ear does not hear, what do you call this? An ancient said, “To call it a single thing is already to miss it.” Just look for yourselves—what more is there? Speech too is endless. Each of you, make your own effort. Take care!

Examination and Discernment

When Huangbo entered the kitchen, he asked the rice steward, “What are you doing?”

The rice steward said, “Sorting rice for the monks.”

Huangbo said, “How much do they eat in a day?”

The rice steward said, “Two and a half shi.”

Huangbo said, “Isn’t that too much?”

The rice steward said, “I am still afraid it may not be enough.”

Huangbo thereupon struck him.

The rice steward then reported this to the Master. The Master said, “I shall examine this old fellow for your sake.”

When he arrived and stood attending him, Huangbo brought up the previous exchange. The Master said, “The rice steward did not understand. Please, Reverend, offer a turning word on his behalf.”

The Master then asked, “Isn’t that too much?”

Huangbo said, “Why not say, ‘Tomorrow they will eat another meal’?”

The Master said, “Why speak of tomorrow? Let them eat right now!” Having said this, he slapped Huangbo.

Huangbo said, “This madman! Here he comes again, stroking the tiger’s whiskers.”

The Master gave a shout and drove him out.

(Later, Guishan asked Yangshan, “What was the meaning of these two venerable masters?” Yangshan said, “What does the Reverend think?” Guishan said, “Only after raising a son does one know a father’s kindness.” Yangshan said, “Not so.” Guishan said, “Then what do you say?” Yangshan said, “It is much like colluding with a thief to raid one’s own house.”)

The Master asked a monk, “Where have you come from?” The monk gave a shout. The Master bowed and sat down. When the monk hesitated, the Master struck him.

When the Master saw a monk approach, he raised his whisk. The monk bowed, and the Master struck him.

Again, when he saw a monk approach, he raised his whisk. The monk paid no heed, and the Master struck him as well.

One day, the Master and Puhua went to a donor’s home for a meal.

The Master asked, “A hair swallows the vast ocean; a mustard seed contains Mount Sumeru. Is this a miraculous function of spiritual powers, or is it simply the suchness of the fundamental essence?”

Puhua kicked over the dining table.

The Master said, “Too crude.”

Puhua said, “What place is this, to speak of crude and refined?”

The next day, the Master again went with Puhua to a meal offering and asked, “How does today’s offering compare with yesterday’s?”

As before, Puhua kicked over the dining table.

The Master said, “It will do, but it is too crude!”

Puhua said, “Blind man! What crude or refined is there to speak of in the Buddha Dharma?”

The Master stuck out his tongue.

One day, the Master was sitting by the earth stove in the monks’ hall with Elder Mutta of Heyang. They were saying, “Puhua runs wild through the marketplace every day—who knows whether he is ordinary or a sage?” Before they had finished speaking, Puhua entered.

The Master immediately asked, “Are you ordinary or a sage?”

Puhua said, “You tell me: am I ordinary or a sage?”

The Master gave a shout.

Puhua pointed with his hand and said, “Heyang is a newlywed bride; Mutta is an old woman’s Chan. But this little fellow Linji has one eye.”

The Master said, “You thief!”

Puhua said, “Thief, thief!” and went out.

One day Puhua was eating raw vegetables in front of the monks’ hall. Seeing him, the Master said, “You look just like a donkey.”

Puhua immediately brayed like a donkey.

The Master said, “You thief.”

Puhua said, “Thief! Thief!” and went out.

Puhua would often shake a bell in the marketplace and say, “If you come with a clear head, I strike you. If you come with a dark head, I strike you. If you come from the four quarters and eight directions, I strike you like a whirlwind. If you come from empty space, I strike you all at once.”

The Master sent an attendant there and instructed him that, as soon as he heard Puhua say this, he should seize him and ask, “What if one does not come in any of those ways?”

Puhua shook him off and said, “Tomorrow there will be a feast at the Great Compassion Monastery.”

When the attendant returned and reported this to the Master, the Master said, “I have always had my doubts about this fellow!”

An old monk came to see the Master. Without first exchanging the customary greetings, he asked, “Is bowing correct, or is not bowing correct?”

The Master immediately gave a shout.

The old monk then bowed.

The Master said, “What a fine grass-bandit!”

The old monk said, “Thief, thief,” and went out.

The Master said, “Do not say that nothing is better!”

As the head seat stood attending him, the Master asked, “Is there any fault?”

The head seat said, “There is.”

The Master said, “Is the fault on the guest’s side or the host’s side?”

The head seat said, “Both are at fault.”

The Master said, “Where is the fault?”

The head seat immediately went out.

The Master said, “Do not say that nothing is better!”

Later, a monk recounted this to Nanquan. Nanquan said, “Official horses trample one another.”

When the Master entered a military camp to accept a meal offering, he saw some officers at the gate.

Pointing to a pillar, the Master asked, “Is this ordinary or a sage?”

The officers had no reply.

The Master struck the pillar and said, “Even if it could speak, it would still only be a wooden post.” Then he went in.

The Master asked the monastery superintendent, “Where have you come from?”

The superintendent said, “I have been to town selling yellow rice.”

The Master said, “Did you sell it all?”

The superintendent said, “I sold it all.”

The Master drew a line before him with his staff and said, “Could you sell this too?”

The superintendent gave a shout. The Master struck him.

The cook arrived, and the Master related the previous exchange. The cook said, “The superintendent did not understand the Reverend’s meaning.”

The Master said, “What would you do?”

The cook bowed. The Master struck him as well.

A sūtra lecturer came to visit the Master.

The Master asked the lecturer, “What sūtra do you lecture on?”

The lecturer said, “I am unworthy and lacking in learning; I have only roughly studied the Treatise on the Hundred Dharmas.”

The Master said, “One person understands the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teachings; another does not understand the Three Vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teachings. Are they the same or different?”

The lecturer said, “Those who understand are the same; those who do not understand are different.”

Lepu, who was serving as attendant and standing behind the Master, said, “Lecturer! What place is this, to speak of sameness and difference?”

The Master turned and asked the attendant, “And what would you say?”

The attendant gave a shout.

After seeing the lecturer off, the Master returned and asked the attendant, “Was it you who just shouted at this old monk?”

The attendant said, “Yes.”

The Master struck him.

The Master heard that Deshan of the second generation had instructed his students, “Whether you can speak or cannot speak, thirty blows.”

The Master told Lepu to ask him, “Why thirty blows for one who can speak? When he strikes you, seize the staff and give it a push; see what he does.”

Lepu went there and asked as instructed. Deshan immediately struck him.

Lepu seized the staff and gave it a push. Deshan then returned to his quarters.

Lepu returned and reported this to the Master. The Master said, “I have always had my doubts about this fellow. Even so, have you seen Deshan?”

When Lepu hesitated, the Master struck him.

One day Attendant Wang visited the Master. As they looked over the monks’ hall, he asked, “Do the monks in this hall read sūtras?”

The Master said, “They do not read sūtras.”

The attendant said, “Do they study Chan?”

The Master said, “They do not study Chan.”

The attendant said, “They neither read sūtras nor study Chan. What, after all, do they do?”

The Master said, “I want them all to become Buddhas and patriarchs.”

The attendant said, “Though gold dust is precious, if it falls into the eye it becomes a cataract. What about that?”

The Master said, “I had thought you were merely a worldly fellow.”

The Master asked Xingshan, “What is the white ox in the open field?” Xingshan said, “Moo, moo.” The Master said, “Mute, are you?” Xingshan said, “What would the elder say?” The Master said, “You beast.”

The Master asked Lepu, “Since ancient times, one person has used the staff and another has used the shout. Which is closer to the truth?”

Lepu said, “Neither is close.”

The Master said, “What is it where closeness lies?”

Lepu gave a shout. The Master then struck him.

When the Master saw a monk approach, he spread out both hands. The monk had no reply, and the Master said, “Do you understand?”

The monk said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “You cannot split open the whole lump. I will give you two coins.”

Dajue came to visit. The Master raised his whisk, and Dajue spread out his sitting cloth.

The Master threw down the whisk. Dajue gathered up his sitting cloth and entered the monks' hall.

The monks said, "Could this monk be the Master's close acquaintance? He neither bowed nor received a blow."

When the Master heard this, he ordered Dajue summoned. Dajue came out.

The Master said, "The assembly says that you have not yet paid respects to the elder."

Dajue said, "I beg your pardon," and returned to the assembly.

When Zhaozhou was traveling on pilgrimage, he visited the Master and encountered him washing his feet.

Zhaozhou then asked, "What was the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"

The Master said, "It so happens that this old monk is washing his feet."

Zhou stepped forward and made a gesture of listening.

The Master said, "Do you want a second ladle of foul water splashed over you?"

Zhou then withdrew.

Senior Monk Ding came to pay his respects and asked, "What is the great meaning of the Buddha-Dharma?"

The Master stepped down from his rope bed, seized him, gave him a slap, and then pushed him away.

Ding stood there motionless.

A monk standing nearby said, "Senior Monk Ding, why do you not make prostrations?"

As Ding was about to bow, he suddenly attained great awakening.

Magu came to pay his respects. Spreading out his sitting cloth, he asked, "Of the twelve-faced Avalokiteśvara, which face is the true one?"

The Master stepped down from his rope bed. With one hand he gathered up the sitting cloth, and with the other he seized Magu, saying, “Where has the twelve-faced Avalokiteśvara gone?”

Magu turned around and was about to sit on the rope bed when the Master picked up his staff and struck him.

Magu caught hold of it, and the two seized each other as they entered the abbot’s quarters.

The Master asked a monk, “At times, a shout is like the precious sword of the Diamond King; at times, a shout is like a golden-haired lion crouching on the ground; at times, a shout is like a probing pole and a shadowing grass; at times, a shout does not function as a shout. How do you understand this?”

As the monk began to deliberate, the Master immediately gave a shout.

The Master asked a nun, “Have you come well, or have you come badly?”

The nun immediately gave a shout.

The Master raised his staff and said, “Say more! Say more!”

The nun shouted again. The Master then struck her.

Longya asked, “What was the Patriarch’s intention in coming from the West?”

The Master said, “Hand me the meditation board.”

Longya handed the meditation board to the Master.

As soon as the Master received it, he struck him.

Longya said, “Strike me if you wish, but there is still no Patriarch’s intention!”

Later, Longya went to Cuiwei and asked, “What was the Patriarch’s intention in coming from the West?”

Cuiwei said, “Hand me the cushion.”

Longya handed the cushion to Cuiwei. As soon as Cuiwei received it, he struck him.

Longya said, “Strike me if you wish, but there is still no Patriarch’s intention.”

After Longya became abbot of a monastery, a monk entered his room to seek instruction and asked, “When you were traveling on pilgrimage, you encountered the two venerable masters in these exchanges. Did you approve of them?”

Longya said, “I approved of them deeply, but there was still no Patriarch’s intention.”

At Jingshan there were five hundred members of the assembly, yet few came to seek instruction.

Huangbo sent the Master to Jingshan and said to him, “What will you do when you get there?”

The Master said, “When I arrive there, I will have my own expedient means.”

When the Master arrived at Jingshan, he adjusted his robes and entered the Dharma hall to see Jingshan.

Just as Jingshan raised his head, the Master gave a shout.

As Jingshan was about to open his mouth, the Master flicked his sleeve and left.

Soon afterward, a monk asked Jingshan, “What words did that monk say just now that made him shout at you, Master?”

Jingshan said, “That monk came from Huangbo’s assembly. Do you want to know? Just ask him. More than half of Jingshan’s five hundred members have dispersed.”

One day, Puhua went through the marketplace asking people for a long monastic robe. Everyone offered him one, but Puhua refused them all. The Master had the monastery steward buy a coffin.

When Puhua returned, the Master said, “I have made you a long robe.”

Puhua carried it away on his own back and walked around the marketplace shouting, “Linji has made me a long robe! I am going to pass away at the East Gate!”

The townspeople all rushed after him to watch.

Puhua said, “Not today. Tomorrow I shall go to the South Gate to pass away.”

For three days he did this, and no one believed him. On the fourth day, no one followed him. He went out of the city alone, climbed into the coffin himself, and asked a passerby to nail it shut. News immediately spread, and the townspeople rushed out to open the coffin. They found that his entire body had vanished; they heard only the faint ringing of bells in the sky, gradually fading away.

Record of Practice

When the Master first joined Huangbo’s assembly, his practice was pure and single-minded. The head seat remarked, “Though he is young, he differs from the rest.” He

then asked, “How long have you been here, Reverend?” The Master replied, “Three years.”

The head seat asked, “Have you ever gone to seek instruction?” The Master replied, “I have never sought instruction; I do not know what to ask.” The head seat said, “Why do you not ask the hall master: ‘What is the true essential meaning of the Buddhadharma?’” The Master went to ask. Before he had finished speaking, Huangbo struck him. When the Master came down, the head seat asked, “How did your question go?” The Master said, “Before I had finished asking, the Master struck me. I do not understand.” The head seat said, “Just go ask again.” The Master went again, and Huangbo struck him again.

Thus he asked three times and was struck three times. The Master came and told the head seat, “Fortunately, through your compassion, you had me pay my respects to the Master and ask him. I asked three times and was struck three times. I regret that my karmic obstructions and adverse conditions prevent me from grasping the profound meaning. I shall now take my leave.” The head seat said, “If you are leaving, you must first take leave of the Master.” The Master bowed and withdrew.

The head seat went ahead to the Master and said, “That young man who asked questions is most much in accord with the Dharma. When he comes to take leave, skillfully receive him. In time, he will grow into a great tree, providing shade for people throughout the land.” When the Master went to take leave of Huangbo, Huangbo said, “Do not go elsewhere. Go to Dayu at the Gao’an riverbank; he will surely explain it for you.”

The Master went to Dayu. Dayu asked, “Where have you come from?” The Master replied, “From Huangbo.” Dayu asked, “What words did Huangbo speak?” The Master said, “I asked three times about the true essential meaning of the Buddhadharma, and three times I was struck.”

“I do not know whether I was at fault or not.” Dayu said, “Huangbo has been so grandmotherly that he has worn himself out for your sake! Yet you come here asking whether you were at fault or not!” At these words, the Master had a great awakening. He said, “Originally, there is not much to Huangbo’s Buddhadharma!” Dayu seized him and said, “You bed-wetting brat! Just now you were speaking of ‘being at fault or not,’ and now you say, ‘There is not much to Huangbo’s Buddhadharma.’ What truth have you seen? Speak quickly! Speak quickly!” The Master struck Dayu three times in the ribs. Dayu pushed him away and said, “Your teacher is Huangbo; it is none of my business.”

The Master took leave of Dayu and returned to Huangbo. Seeing him arrive, Huangbo asked, “This fellow comes and goes—when will it ever end?” The Master replied, “It is only because of your grandmotherly concern.” Having completed the

formal courtesies, he stood waiting. Huangbo asked, “Where have you been?” The Master replied, “Yesterday, following your compassionate instruction, I went to consult Dayu.” Huangbo asked, “What words did Dayu speak?” The Master then recounted the preceding exchange.

Huangbo said, “How can I get hold of that fellow? I will give him a sound beating!” The Master replied, “Why speak of waiting until he comes? Take it now!” He then slapped Huangbo. Huangbo said, “This madman! Here he comes tugging the tiger’s whiskers.” The Master gave a shout. Huangbo said, “Attendant, lead this madman to the monks’ hall.”

(Later, Guishan cited this exchange and asked Yangshan, “At that time, did Linji gain strength from Dayu, or from Huangbo?” Yangshan replied, “Not only did he ride upon the tiger’s head; he also knew how to grasp its tail.”)

The Master was planting pines.

Huangbo asked, “Why plant so many pines deep in the mountains?”

The Master replied, “First, to lend beauty to the monastery; second, to serve as a model for later generations.” Having said this, he struck the ground three times with his hoe.

Huangbo said, “Even so, you have already received thirty blows from me!”

The Master again struck the ground three times with his hoe and made a “whoosh, whoosh” sound.

Huangbo said, “Through you, my lineage will flourish greatly in the world.”

(Later, Guishan cited these words and asked Yangshan, “At that time, Huangbo entrusted this only to Linji. Was there anyone else?” Yangshan replied, “There was, but the time is far removed, and I do not wish to mention it to you, Master.” Guishan said, “Even so, I still want to know. Just speak of it.” Yangshan said, “One person pointed south, and the command was carried out in Wu and Yue. When a great wind arose, he stopped.” [This was a prophecy of Chan Master Fengxue.])

While the Master was standing by Deshan, Deshan said, “I am tired today.” The Master replied, “Why is this old fellow talking in his sleep?” Deshan struck him. The Master overturned the rope bed, and Deshan let the matter rest.

While the Master was participating in communal work, hoeing the ground, he saw Huangbo approaching and stood leaning on his hoe.

Huangbo said, “Is this fellow tired?”

The Master replied, “I have not even raised my hoe. What is there to be tired about?”

Huangbo struck him.

The Master caught the staff and with one shove knocked Huangbo over.

Huangbo called out, “Monastic steward! Monastic steward! Help me up!”

The steward came forward to help him up and said, “How can you tolerate this madman’s rudeness, Master?”

As soon as Huangbo had risen, he struck the steward.

The Master hoed the ground and said, “Elsewhere they cremate people; here I bury them alive all at once.”

(Later, Guishan asked Yangshan, “What was Huangbo’s intention in striking the steward?” Yangshan replied, “The real thief had escaped, while the tracker of the trail received the blows.”)

One day, while the Master was sitting before the monks’ hall, he saw Huangbo coming and immediately closed his eyes.

Huangbo made a frightening gesture, then returned to his quarters.

The Master followed him to his quarters and bowed in thanks.

The head seat was standing beside Huangbo.

Huangbo said, “Though this monk is young, he knows of this matter.”

The head seat said, “The old Master’s heels do not touch the ground, yet you offer testimony for a young man.”

Huangbo slapped himself across the mouth.

The head seat said, “Knowing it is enough.”

The Master was asleep in the hall. Huangbo came down, saw him, and struck the headboard once with his staff.

The Master raised his head, saw that it was Huangbo, and went back to sleep.

Huangbo struck the headboard again, then went to the upper section. Seeing the head seat sitting in meditation, he said, “The young man in the lower section is sitting in meditation, while you here are indulging in deluded thoughts!”

The head seat said, “What is this old fellow doing?”

Huangbo struck the headboard once and left.

(Later, Guishan asked Yangshan, “What was Huangbo’s intention in entering the monks’ hall?” Yangshan replied, “Two colors, one contest.”)

One day, during communal work, the Master was walking at the rear.

Huangbo turned around, saw that the Master’s hands were empty, and asked, “Where is your hoe?”

The Master replied, “Someone has taken it away.”

Huangbo said, “Come closer; let us discuss something.”

The Master stepped forward.

Huangbo raised his hoe and said, “This alone is something no one in the world can lift.”

The Master seized it from his hand, raised it, and said, “Then why is it in my hands?”

Huangbo said, “Today there has been a great deal of communal work!” He then returned to the monastery.

(Later, Guishan asked Yangshan, “The hoe was in Huangbo’s hands; why was Linji able to snatch it away?” Yangshan replied, “The thief may be a petty man, but his wisdom surpasses that of a gentleman.”)

The Master carried a letter for Huangbo to Guishan.

At that time, Yangshan was serving as guest prefect. Having received the letter, he asked, “This is from Huangbo. Which is the special messenger?”

The Master slapped him.

Yangshan restrained him and said, “Elder brother, once you know it is this kind of matter, let it rest.”

They went together to see Guishan.

Guishan asked, “How many followers does Elder Brother Huangbo have?”

The Master replied, “Seven hundred.”

Guishan asked, “Who leads them?”

The Master replied, “He has just delivered the letter.” The Master then asked Guishan, “How many followers are here, Master?”

Guishan replied, “One thousand five hundred.”

The Master said, “Far too many!”

Guishan said, “Elder Brother Huangbo’s are not few either.”

When the Master took leave of Guishan, Yangshan escorted him out and said, “In the future, you will go north and have a place to reside.”

The Master said, “How could such a thing be?”

Yangshan said, “Just go. Later, there will be someone to assist you, elder brother. This person will have a head but no tail, a beginning but no end.”

Later, the Master arrived in Zhenzhou, where Puhua was already present.

When the Master began teaching publicly, Puhua assisted and supported him.

Not long after the Master had taken up residence, Puhua cast off his entire body.

During the summer retreat, the Master went up to Huangbo and saw the Master reading a sūtra.

The Master said, “I had thought you were a person; it turns out you are an old monk covering black beans.”

After staying several days, he took leave.

Huangbo said, “You came after the beginning of the summer retreat. Why not stay until its end?”

The Master replied, “I came only briefly to pay my respects to you, Master.”

Huangbo then struck him and drove him away.

After walking several miles, the Master doubted this matter and returned to complete the summer retreat.

One day, the Master took leave of Huangbo. Huangbo asked, “Where are you going?”

The Master replied, “If not to Henan, then back to Hebei.”

Huangbo struck him.

The Master restrained him and gave him a slap.

Huangbo burst into laughter and called to the attendant, “Bring the Chan board and desk of our late master Baizhang!”

The Master said, “Attendant, bring fire!”

Huangbo said, “Even so, take them away. In the future, you will silence the tongues of everyone under heaven!”

(Later, Weishan asked Yangshan, “Did Linji not disappoint Huangbo?” Yangshan said, “No.” Weishan said, “And how about you?” Yangshan said, “Only one who knows gratitude can repay it.” Weishan said, “Among the ancients, is there anyone similar?” Yangshan said, “There is. But the time is so remote that I do not wish to mention it to Your Reverence.”

Weishan said, “Though that is so, I still wish to know. Just cite it.” Yangshan said, “At the Śūraṅgama assembly, Ānanda praised the Buddha, saying: ‘I offer this profound mind to dust-mote lands; this is called repaying the Buddha’s grace.’ Is this not an act of repaying grace?” Weishan said, “So it is, so it is. To equal one’s teacher in understanding is to diminish the teacher’s virtue by half; only when one’s understanding surpasses the teacher’s is one fit to receive the transmission.”)

The Master arrived at the stūpa of Bodhidharma.

The stūpa keeper said, “Venerable, will you first bow to the Buddha or first bow to the Patriarch?”

The Master said, “I bow to neither Buddha nor Patriarch.”

The stūpa keeper said, “What grievance do the Buddha and Patriarch have against the Venerable?”

The Master flicked his sleeves and left.

While traveling on pilgrimage, the Master came to Longguang. Longguang had ascended the hall.

The Master came forward and asked, “Without displaying the point of the blade, how can one gain victory?”

Longguang remained seated.

The Master said, “Great spiritual teacher, do you have no skillful means?”

Longguang stared wide-eyed and said, “Ha!”

The Master pointed with his hand and said, “This old fellow has shown his weakness today!”

He came to Heping of Sanfeng, who asked, “Where have you come from?”

The Master said, “From Huangbo.”

Ping said, “What sayings does Huangbo have?”

The Master said, “Last night the golden ox was reduced to ashes; to this day, no trace of it can be found.”

Ping said, “The autumn wind blows through a jade flute; who is the one who knows the tune?”

The Master said, “It passes straight through ten thousand barriers and does not abide within the clear sky.”

Ping said, “Your question is pitched too high.”

The Master said, “The dragon gives birth to a golden phoenix chick, which breaks through the blue crystal.”

Ping said, “Sit and have some tea.”

He further asked, “Where have you recently departed from?”

The Master said, “Longguang.”

Ping said, “How has Longguang been lately?”

The Master immediately left.

He came to Daci. Daci was sitting in the abbot’s quarters.

The Master asked, “How is it when one sits upright in the abbot’s room?”

Daci said, “The cold pine, of one hue, stands apart for a thousand years; an old rustic holds up a flower, and spring reaches ten thousand lands.”

The Master said, “The body of perfect wisdom eternally transcends past and present; the Three Mountains lock off ten thousand barriers.”

Daci gave a shout.

The Master also gave a shout.

Daci said, “What are you doing?”

The Master flicked his sleeves and left.

He came to Huayan in Xiangzhou. Huayan leaned on his staff, assuming the posture of sleep.

The Master said, “Old Reverend, why are you dozing?”

Huayan said, “A genuine Chan practitioner is indeed quite different.”

The Master said, “Attendant! Prepare tea for the Reverend.”

Huayan then called to the monastic steward, “Arrange a place for this venerable in the third seat!”

He came to Cuifeng.

Cuifeng asked, “Where have you come from?”

The Master said, “From Huangbo.”

Cuifeng said, “What sayings does Huangbo use to instruct people?”

The Master said, “Huangbo has no sayings.”

Cuifeng said, “Why does he have none?”

The Master said, “Even if there were any, there would be no way to cite them.”

Cuifeng said, “Just cite them and let me see.”

The Master said, “One arrow passes beyond the Western Heaven.”

He came to Xiangtian.

The Master asked, “Neither ordinary nor holy—please speak quickly, Master!”

Xiangtian said, “This old monk is simply thus.”

The Master gave a shout and said, “So many bald fellows—what bowl are they looking for here?”

He came to Minghua.

Minghua asked, “What are you doing, coming and going?”

The Master said, “Merely wearing out straw sandals.”

Minghua said, “Ultimately, what is it?”

The Master said, “This old fellow does not even recognize a huatou.”

He went toward Fenglin.

On the road he met an old woman. She asked, “Where are you going?”

The Master said, “I am going to Fenglin.”

The old woman said, “You have just happened upon Fenglin when he is away.”

The Master said, “Where has he gone?”

The old woman simply walked on.

The Master called after her.

When the old woman turned her head, the Master struck her.

He came to Fenglin.

Fenglin asked, “I have a matter on which I would like to ask you; may I?”

The Master said, “Why carve a sore into flesh?”

Fenglin said, “The sea moon is clear and casts no shadow; the swimming fish alone is deluded.”

The Master said, “If the sea moon casts no shadow, how can the swimming fish be deluded?”

Fenglin said, “Watching the wind, one knows the waves will rise; admiring the water, wild sails drift.”

The Master said, “A solitary wheel shines alone; river and mountains are still. With a single laugh, heaven and earth are startled.”

Fenglin said, “Though you may wield three inches of radiance over heaven and earth, at this very moment, try speaking one phrase.”

The Master said, “When meeting a swordsman on the road, one must present a sword; do not offer a poem to one who is not a poet.”

Fenglin then let the matter rest.

The Master composed this verse: “The great Way cuts off sameness; let it turn east or west. Flint-fire cannot reach it; lightning cannot penetrate it.”

(Weishan asked Yangshan, "'Flint-fire cannot reach it; lightning cannot penetrate it.' What have all the sages since ancient times used to guide people?" Yangshan said, "What does Your Reverence mean?" Weishan said, "Whenever there are words, there is no real meaning." Yangshan said, "No." Weishan said, "Then how do you put it?" Yangshan said, "Officially, not even a needle is allowed; privately, carriages and horses may pass.")

He came to Jinniu.

Seeing the Master arrive, Jinniu held his staff crosswise and squatted in the gateway.

The Master struck the staff three times with his hand, then returned to the hall and sat in the first seat.

Jinniu came down and, seeing him, asked, "When host and guest meet, each should observe the proper deportment. Where has this venerable come from? You are exceedingly discourteous!"

The Master said, "What did the old Reverend say?"

As Jinniu was about to open his mouth, the Master struck him.

Jinniu made as if to fall over, and the Master struck him again.

Jinniu said, "Today I have not gotten the advantage."

(Weishan asked Yangshan, "Between these two venerable masters, was there victory or defeat?" Yangshan said, "If there was victory, it was complete victory; if there was defeat, it was complete defeat.")

As the Master was about to pass away, he sat upright and said, "After my extinction, you must not extinguish my Treasury of the True Dharma Eye."

Sansheng came forward and said, "How would we dare extinguish the Master's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye?"

The Master said, "If someone later asks you about it, what will you tell them?"

Sansheng gave a shout.

The Master said, "Who would have known that my Treasury of the True Dharma Eye would be extinguished here by this blind donkey!" Having finished speaking, he passed away peacefully while seated upright.

The Master's personal name was Yixuan. He was from Nanhua in Caozhou, and his lay surname was Xing. As a child he was exceptionally intelligent; when grown, he

was renowned for filial piety. After shaving his head and receiving full ordination, he resided in lecture halls, thoroughly studying the Vinaya and broadly investigating the sūtras and treatises. Before long he sighed, “These are prescriptions for healing the world; they are not the intent of a special transmission outside the teachings.” He then changed his robes and traveled in all directions. He first studied under Huangbo, then visited Dayu; the words of their encounter are recorded in the Record of His Conduct.

Having received Huangbo’s seal of approval, he soon arrived at a small monastery beside the Hutuo River, in the southeastern corner outside Zhenzhou City in Hebei, where he served as abbot. It was from this place that he acquired the name “Linji.” At that time, Puhua was already there, feigning madness among the assembly; neither sages nor ordinary people could fathom him. When the Master arrived, he assisted him. As the Master’s teaching activity flourished, Puhua shed his whole body. This fulfilled Yangshan’s prophecy of a “Little Śākyamuni.” Just as military conflict arose, the Master left the place.

The Grand Commandant Mo Junhe donated a residence within the city to establish a monastery, also naming it Linji, and invited the Master to reside there. Later, the Master departed southward for He Prefecture. Wang, the prefectural attendant, received him with the honors due a master. Before long, he came to Xinghua Monastery in Daming Prefecture and resided in its eastern hall. Though the Master was not ill, one day he suddenly gathered his robes, sat upright, and, after completing an exchange with Sansheng, passed away in stillness. This was the tenth day of the first month of the dinghai year, the eighth year of the Xiantong era of the Tang dynasty. His disciples built a stūpa for the Master’s whole body in the northwestern corner of Daming Prefecture. By imperial decree, he was given the posthumous title Chan Master Huizhao, and his stūpa was named “Chengling.”

With palms joined and head bowed in reverence, I have recorded this brief account of the Master. Respectfully written by Yanzhao, a junior Dharma heir residing at Baoshou in Zhenzhou.

End of The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Huizhao of Linji in Zhenzhou

Collated by Cunjiang, a junior Dharma heir residing at Xinghua in Daming Prefecture

Woodblocks kept at the East Scripture Office of Faxing Monastery, fifteenth day of the eighth month, ninth year of Eikyō