Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight

Teacher Qi Zhijun

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Chan Master Dahui Zonggao



Dahui Zonggao (1089–1163), whose secular surname was Xi, was a native of Ningguo in Xuanzhou (present-day Anhui). A Song-dynasty monk of the Yangqi branch of the

Linji school, his style name was Tanhui; he was also known by the sobriquets Miaoxi and Yunmen.

Preface to the Phrase-by-Phrase Explanation of the Armory of the Chan School

The Chan school does not establish itself on words and letters; it stands sheer as a wall ten thousand fathoms high. Raise the mind and you are already wrong; deliberate and you have already gone astray. “The step beyond—though a thousand sages have appeared, none has transmitted it.” After the Song and Yuan dynasties, records of sayings became prevalent. Chan Master Dahui Pujue, whose personal name was Zonggao, resided at Mount Jing in Hangzhou and studied under Yuanwu Keqin. To avoid establishing views and to carry through the special transmission outside the teachings, he once burned the Blue Cliff Record, which his teacher had annotated and commented upon. A singular and independent figure, he was truly a great master of his age!

Chan Master Dahui wrote a work entitled Arsenal of the Chan School, recording the causes and conditions through which Chan practitioners realized the Way, the states of cultivation and realization they attained, and their styles and modes of action. Master Yuanyin annotated it in the margins, and his comments are exquisitely penetrating; one may say that he possessed the eye at the crown of the head. Lay practitioner Qi Zhijun of Henan then “sawed it apart,” illuminating it from various angles. The case and its covering fit perfectly together; reading it fills one with Dharma joy.

Some say that Chan values “sudden awakening” and does not depend on much talk. Yet essence necessarily gives rise to function, and function necessarily returns to essence. Essence and function are nondual. The numinous light shines alone; a dragon flies through a broken wall—the marvel lies in adding the finishing touch. Those who have seen their nature may speak horizontally, speak vertically, or speak with blazing intensity; all return to the supreme truth. As it is said, “Dead water does not harbor dragons; deluded thoughts are precisely wondrous functioning!”

If those who read this book rely on it to form interpretations, they will inevitably block the gate to their own awakening and indeed deserve a blow from the stick. If they respond with a knowing smile, I still fear that they may be misled by it. What, then, is to be done? It is said: “The peach blossoms next door are red, red again.” May we encourage one another.

Xu Hengzhi

October 17, 2002

Preface

In those days, when the World-Honored One suddenly awakened beneath the Bodhi tree, he exclaimed three times, “How marvelous!” He grieved for sentient beings, who, because of inverted and deluded thoughts, had lost sight of their inherent Tathāgata wisdom, virtues, and characteristics. The World-Honored One therefore gave rise to great compassion. Undaunted by traveling far and wide, he taught the Dharma for forty-nine years, opening up the whole body of teachings delivered by the Buddha during his lifetime. Whether teaching broadly or in detail, his sole purpose was to enable sentient beings to recognize their own Original Face, to awaken them to the fact that they are originally Buddhas, inherently free and liberated—in other words, to enable them to directly realize the wondrous true suchness-nature of the Tathāgata-garbha.

After the flower was held up at Vulture Peak and Kāśyapa smiled; after the great teaching gradually spread eastward and the patriarch came from the west, the Chan school—the unsurpassed mind-seal of the Buddhadharma—took root, sprouted, and flourished through the Mahāyāna spirit of China. Thereafter, Buddhist disciples everywhere could at last knock at the cave of Mount Shaoshi, while monastics throughout the land could forever drink the milk of Caoxi. Mind sealed mind, and lamp was transmitted to lamp; branches and leaves spread luxuriantly, developing into five houses and seven lineages—a magnificent sight. This marvelous blossom in the ocean of Dharma, the Chan school that directly points to the human mind and enables one to see one’s nature and become a Buddha, thus bloomed throughout the fertile soil of China.

Just as one seeking treasure across the sea must first make use of the expedient means of boats, ships, oars, and rudders, so must all children of the Buddha who wish to subdue the hostile enemy of ignorance and birth and death, and ultimately attain unsurpassed bodhi, take vajra prajñā as a sharp weapon, great compassion as armor, Great Vows as a mount, the direct mind as a banner, and selflessness as a bugle call. Only then can they prevail.

From ancient times to the present, countless revered predecessors, venerable elders, Chan masters, and great adepts have spared neither their lives nor their comfort. Some slept on brushwood and tasted gall as they exerted themselves in investigation; some, with the earnest concern of an old grandmother, devoted themselves wholeheartedly to others; some stood as sheer and towering as a thousand-foot cliff; and some patiently guided others step by step. They left behind innumerable precious teachings and widely celebrated koans.

Taken together, these became the armory of the Chan school and a guide to the ocean of Dharma, enabling later students, in the course of study and practice, to use

them to sustain vigilant awareness, correct their views, distinguish right from wrong, press forward through the Chan barrier, and finally enter the hall and inner chamber, return home and sit securely, and attain great peace and joy.

What is meant by “the armory of the Chan school”? Zong, or “school,” is the Buddha-nature inherently possessed by sentient beings; it is the wondrous, luminous true mind that neither increases in sages nor decreases in ordinary beings; it is the Buddha’s mind-seal and the Chan school’s name for itself. Men, or “gate,” is the path by which practitioners awaken to the Buddha’s knowledge and vision: the alternating blows and shouts through which teachers reveal the scenery of the original ground; the marvelous awakening seized in an instant, like a spark struck from flint or a flash of lightning; and the gateless gate

to the original landscape, requiring no entry through principle; it is also the universal gate of teaching according to capacity and guiding beings in accordance with conditions. Wu, or “martial,” is the total functioning that manifests when causes and conditions converge and encompass one another: Deshan’s staff, Yunmen’s cake, Linji’s shout, Zhaozhou’s tea, the vajra king’s precious sword, Bodhidharma’s iron staff that cuts off past and present as it rests across his shoulder, and the finger holding up a flower at the Vulture Peak assembly, fragrant even today. Ku, or “storehouse,” is the samādhi through which those of great freedom and great repose respond to circumstances; it is the naked outpouring of the unhindered dhāraṇī of great compassion, and the inexhaustible treasury within the treasury of space.

At this point, an elder brother in the Dharma chuckled and said, “Your words are dazzling, but regrettably they are no more than writings of intellectual understanding and speculative words. To my mind, it is otherwise: zong is a soul-summoning banner; men is roadside talk; wu is a wound dressing applied after one has injured one’s hand on a blade; and ku is a bed-wetter who draws a line on the ground and makes a prison of it! Let us set this matter aside for now. I have a question for you: have you not heard the sūtra say, ‘There is no such sword in the king’s treasury’? Then what is the vajra king’s precious sword in your armory of the Chan school?”

Hearing this, I could not help laughing aloud: “This sword has long had a name but no reality. Why? Seeing does not see seeing; all who see are lost. Do you not believe it?”

“Look at the sword!”

“Ha ha! Do not misunderstand. By the time you fix your gaze and wait for the moment, the boat has already gone far away.”

“Take care!”

Shancai, a student of Nantong

October 2002

I. Simultaneous Pecking and Chirping

[The Koan in Its Original Form]

Guang, a man of Zizhou, was known in Chan communities as Guang Wuxin (“Guang No-Mind”).

When he first began traveling in search of instruction, he asked Chan Master Zhi of Yungai, “What was the intent of Xinghua’s striking the vinaya attendant?”

Zhi stepped down from his rope-bed, spread out both hands, and stuck out his tongue to show him. Guang struck his sitting cloth. Zhi said, “This is turned by the force of the wind.”

He then took this saying to Chan Master Lin of Shishuang and asked him about it. Lin said, “What do you make of it?”

Guang again struck his sitting cloth. Lin said, “What a fine sitting cloth! But you do not know where it lands.”

He also asked Zhenjing. Zhenjing said, “What do you make of it?”

Guang again struck his sitting cloth. Zhenjing said, “He strikes, and you strike as well.”

At these words, Guang underwent a great awakening.

Zhenjing then composed this verse:

A true man ought to cut off what he does not cut off himself; Xinghua was a man who dealt with others thoroughly.

Thereafter, let his own eye open of itself: after the blow, the fine, and expulsion from the monastery.

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

At the critical juncture, he went with the current and gave it a push, enabling the student to awaken. Moreover, there was the marvel of pecking from without and within at the same time. Truly, he was a great master of the school!

[Dissecting the Scale Weight]

First, let us cite the koan of “Xinghua Strikes the Vinaya Attendant”:

Chan Master Xinghua Cunjiang said to Kebin, the vinaya attendant, “Before long, you will become a master of preaching and instruction.”

Kebin said, “I will not join this mutual-guarantee association.”

The master said, “Do you understand and yet refuse to join, or do you not understand and refuse to join?”

He said, “It is not like that at all.”

The master then struck him. He said, “Vinaya Attendant Kebin has lost the Dharma battle. He is fined five strings of cash and must provide a meal for the community.”

The next day, the master himself struck the announcement mallet and declared, “Vinaya Attendant Kebin has lost the Dharma battle and may not eat.”

He then left the monastery.

What, then, is the intent of this koan? Let us first see what the ancient Chan masters had to say:

Chan Master Jianfu of Raozhou ascended the Dharma seat and said: “My late master ordinarily used a hammer to the back of the head, knocking away the many twists and turns in students’ breasts. In former days, Vinaya Attendant Kebin was once struck by this poison of Xinghua’s. Chan communities throughout the land often call it a vision that transcends the school. Yet this not only lets down Xinghua, but also humiliates Kebin. If they are descendants of Linji, they will never cling to grass or depend on trees. Zifu is pleased to see his fellow practitioners today and lays bare his heart and guts.”

He then planted his staff on the ground and gave a shout, saying, “Do you still know where my late master’s words landed? Chan worthies dead in their artifices are as numerous as hemp and millet.”

How fine is the saying, “If they are descendants of Linji, they will never cling to grass or depend on trees.” It has the same import as Vinaya Attendant Kebin’s “I will not join this mutual-guarantee association.” Then what do Chan communities throughout the land call “a vision that transcends the school”? It refers to Vinaya Attendant Kebin’s “It is not like that at all.”

Yet if one calls this “a vision that transcends the school,” one not only lets down Xinghua and fails to understand his intent, but also humiliates Vinaya Attendant

Kebin. Chan Master Zhenjing praised Chan Master Xinghua as one who “dealt with others thoroughly.” In what way was he thorough? Surely it was in “the blow, the fine, and expulsion from the monastery.”

At the same time, he criticized Vinaya Attendant Kebin: “A true man ought to cut off what he does not cut off himself.” What would it mean to cut it off himself? Had Kebin caught Xinghua’s staff and sent it on its way, he would not only have saved the cost of the meal, but would also have cast off the many twists and turns in his breast. Alas, he merely leapt twice—most beautifully, indeed—yet at the crucial moment failed to catch Xinghua’s staff. Thus, “thereafter, let his own eye open of itself.” The hawk has already flown past Silla; what could waiting until later accomplish?

Now let us look at this practitioner Guang. He took great pains over this koan. Unable to penetrate it himself, he went everywhere asking others. When Master Zhi said that his striking the sitting cloth was turned by the force of the wind, he did not understand. When Master Lin said that he did not know where his striking the sitting cloth landed, he still did not understand. But with Zhenjing’s single sentence, “He strikes, and you strike as well,” came a hammer to the back of the head that struck exactly where Guang itched. In an instant, the koan dropped away; the original radiance shone forth clearly before him. His life had not been in vain!

Our revered teacher, Master Yuanyin, praised Chan Master Zhenjing as a “great master of the school” because he could accurately diagnose Guang’s pulse and find the precise critical juncture. Guang was bewildered by this koan, yet persevered diligently, like a chick within its shell, pecking from inside to break free. Zhenjing seized the right moment and pecked simultaneously from outside. At once, the shell of ignorance broke, shattering Guang’s bewilderment. Marvelous indeed! This is precisely “the marvel of pecking from without and within at the same time.”

II. Great Indeed Is Chuyuan

[Original Text of the Koan]

Ciming, Langye, Dayu, and several others took leave of Fenyang. Each deferred to the others and refused to serve as the leader of the pilgrimage group.

Fenyang said, “For this journey, you may not defer on the basis of seniority in ordination. Listen to my verse:”

Heaven has no head; by the city of Jizhou, spears and halberds are displayed.

The general passes beneath the woods on a single horse; within the city of Yuanzhou there is a clamor of chirping.”

Ciming stepped forward and said, “Who is Chuyuan, that he should dare accept this prediction?” He then led the group in bowing farewell.

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

Chuyuan was the Dharma name of Chan Master Ciming. Together with Langye Huijue and Dayu Shouzhi, he was one of the three most thoroughly liberated Dharma heirs under Chan Master Fenyang Shanzhao. Of the three, Chan Master Ciming was the youngest, yet he possessed the deepest realization. He was later called the “Lion of the Western River,” and his lineage flourished greatly.

This occurred when they were studying Chan under Fenyang. One day, led by these three, more than ten students were preparing to leave Fenyang and visit teachers in various places to broaden their horizons. As this was a group of pilgrims, it needed a leader. But the three deferred to one another, and none was willing to serve as the group leader. The old master said: “For this occasion, the leader cannot be chosen according to length of ordination seniority. Listen to my verse:”

Heaven has no head — Da

By the city of Jizhou, spears and halberds are displayed — zai

The general passes beneath the woods on a single horse — Chu

Within the city of Yuanzhou there is a clamor of chirping — yuan

Ha ha! The old master was speaking in character riddles. Ciming was clever enough to recognize that they referred to him. He stepped forward and said, “Who is Chuyuan, that he should dare accept this prediction?” Thus, without further declining, he led everyone in bowing farewell to Fenyang and departed.

This koan has now been explained. Let me add a few more words:

To serve as the group leader — to serve as the teacher who leads and instructs others.

“Dare accept this prediction” — not to enter this fellowship.

“Who is Chuyuan?” — altogether not thus.

Unfortunately, the attendant Kebin was not as thoroughly liberated as Chan Master Ciming. When the next move came, he could not make it; thus he could not immediately serve as a teacher who leads and instructs others.

III. Everything Is Already Complete

[Original Text of the Koan]

When Chan Master Zhantang Wenzhun first went to study under Chan Master Zhenjing, Zhenjing asked, “Where have you come from recently?”

Wenzhun said, “Dayang.”

“Where did you spend the summer retreat?”

Wenzhun said, “Dawei.”

Zhenjing said, “Where is your native place?”

Wenzhun said, “Xingyuan Prefecture.”

Zhenjing spread out both hands and said, “How are my hands like the Buddha’s hands?”

Wenzhun was at a loss for a response.

Zhenjing said, “Your replies just now were each and every one luminous and natural. But when I spoke of the Buddha’s hands, you became obstructed. Tell me, where does the problem lie?”

Wenzhun said, “I do not understand.”

Zhenjing said, “Everything is complete and present—who needs to make it understood?”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

Precisely because everything is so completely present, awakening is instead delayed, for worldly people all seek in the mysterious and marvelous.

[Sawing Through the Balance Weight]

When Chan Master Zhantang Wenzhun first began studying Chan, he went to consult Chan Master Zhenjing. Zhenjing asked him, “Where have you come from—what place did you most recently leave?” He replied, “Dayang Mountain.” Zhenjing asked, “Where did you spend the summer retreat?” He replied, “I spent the summer retreat at Dawei Mountain.” Zhenjing asked, “Where are you from?” He replied, “I am from Xingyuan Prefecture.”

Chan Master Zhenjing spread out both hands and suddenly asked, “How are my hands like the Buddha’s hands?” Chan Master Wenzhun could not answer. Chan Master Zhenjing said, “In those three questions and three answers just now, every

one of your replies was complete and present, luminous and natural, requiring no thought."

Why did speaking of "the Buddha's hands" become an obstruction? Where did the problem arise? Chan Master Wenzhun said that he could not comprehend this question. Look—at this point he could not comprehend. Why could he not comprehend? He felt that "How are my hands like the Buddha's hands?" contained some hidden mystery. The preceding three questions and answers were ordinary, but here it became mysterious and marvelous. Yet ordinary mind is the Way; what mystery is there? Thus Chan Master Zhenjing rebuked him: "Everything is complete and present—who needs to make it understood?"

Precisely because everything is complete and present, he could not grasp it; he always looked for something extraordinary. Therefore, the Elder wrote in his marginal note: "Precisely because everything is so completely present, awakening is instead delayed, for worldly people all seek in the mysterious and marvelous." The Elder's words are not addressed only to this koan; they are also addressed to us.

IV. Still in a Foreign Land

[Original Text of the Koan]

Layman Xian had long studied under Xuedou. Xuedou intended to appoint him as resident master at Jine. When Xian heard of this, he slipped away at night, wrote a verse on the wall of the abbot's quarters, and immediately fled. The verse reads: "It is not that I am without the mind to carry on the ancestral lamp; I am ashamed that I have not yet ranked among the capable ones of Lingnan [Elder's marginal note: 'You give yourself away without being pressed!']. At the third-watch moon, I leave the rocky cave; wordlessly and fondly, I linger over the blue-green heights."

He also said: "For more than thirty years, I have traveled throughout the four seas, never idle in seeking teachers and choosing friends. Today I have reached the ground of no-mind, yet this no-mind has driven me out of the mountains [Elder's marginal note: 'Have you truly reached the ground of no-mind?']."

Later, Xian emerged to teach at Kaixian, succeeding Chan Master Yuan of Deshan and continuing the transmission of Xuedou's lineage. When an old woman at the foot of the mountain saw the special messenger, she happily asked, "Senior Seat Xian has emerged to teach. For whom does he burn incense?" The messenger replied, "Chan Master Yuan of Deshan." The old woman berated him: "Xuedou poured out his guts teaching Chan to you, and you repay his kindness and virtue like this!"

[Elder's Marginal Note]

Chan guest, Chan guest—I know that you still remain in a guest's territory.

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

According to the Records of the Lamp, Chan Master Shanxian of Kaixian (the Layman Xian in this koan) was a Dharma heir of Chan Master Zhixian of Deshan. The Compendium of the Five Lamp Records states: "Chan Master Shanxian of Kaixian on Mount Lu was a native of Linjiang Prefecture. His conduct was pure and austere. He traveled everywhere to visit the seats of masters, aspiring to clear awakening. He studied under Deshan. When he saw Deshan ascend the hall, look over the assembly, and say, 'The lion growls; the elephant king turns his gaze,' he suddenly attained an insight. Entering the master's room, he presented his understanding. Deshan asked, 'How do you understand it?' The master turned his head and said, 'The donkey in the rear garden eats grass.' Deshan approved him. Later he went to Xuedou . . ."

This koan says that he had "long studied under Xuedou." Note the word "long." Completely releasing attachment takes considerable time. The old woman at the foot of the mountain said, "Xuedou poured out his guts teaching Chan to you," showing that Chan Master Xuedou had put much effort into him over a long period. Had he truly become entirely free of attachment? Not necessarily.

The Elder expressed just such doubts: "Have you truly reached the ground of no-mind?" He also said that the verse, "I am ashamed that I have not yet ranked among the capable ones of Lingnan," was "giving himself away without being pressed." If one cannot be entirely free of attachment, then one "still remains in a guest's territory." Thus the Elder's marginal note reads: "Chan guest, Chan guest—I know that you still remain in a guest's territory."

If he still remained in a guest's territory, then he still needed to study and practice; there was no need at all to "carry on the ancestral lamp."

V. Extraordinary Skills

[Original Text of the Koan]

The old master Shun of Yunju often ridiculed Chan Master Yihuai of Tianyi for teaching "vine-entanglement Chan." One day, upon hearing that Yihuai had passed away, he joined his palms in the Dharma hall and said, "I am glad that the vine stump has finally fallen over." At that time, Yuantong Faxiu was serving as the monastic disciplinarian in the assembly. Whenever he saw this, he berated him

without ceasing, and said to his colleagues, “I must have it out with this old fellow.” At the evening assembly, there was again the same scolding as before.

Faxiu stepped forward from the assembly and said sternly, “Have you not seen what the Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment says—” Shun abruptly said, “You have all been standing for a long time. Everyone, please take care!” Then he returned to the abbot’s quarters. Faxiu said, “This old fellow is all eyes. Even his scolding of Master Huai hit the mark.”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

His skill is indeed extraordinary!

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

Yuantong Faxiu was Chan Master Faxiu of Yuantong, a Dharma heir of Chan Master Yihuai of Tianyi. At that time, he was serving as monastic disciplinarian under Chan Master Xiaoshun of Yunju (Old Master Shun). Ordinarily, when Old Master Shun ridiculed his teacher, he endured it. But when his teacher entered parinirvāṇa and Old Master Shun continued to ridicule him, Chan Master Faxiu resolved to reason the matter out with Old Master Shun.

At the evening assembly, Old Master Shun again began to scold. Chan Master Faxiu stepped forward to reason with him in a harsh and forceful manner. Yet Old Master Shun cut him off and casually said, “Everyone has been standing for a long time. Go back and rest. Take care, everyone!” Faxiu could not reason the matter out, but then said, “This old fellow is all eyes. Even his scolding of Master Huai hit the mark.” He had just stepped forward to argue, yet then said that the scolding was right. What is going on here?

You should know that Chan Master Faxiu’s Dharma eye was clear and penetrating, and he was quite able to discern right from wrong. If Old Master Shun had also argued with him, would that not itself have become vine-entanglement Chan? Then he would have had no grounds for ridiculing Chan Master Yihuai of Tianyi for teaching vine-entanglement Chan. With the swift blade that cuts through tangled hemp, he cut off Faxiu’s words, did not argue with him, and turned to return to the abbot’s quarters. Old Master Shun was a true master of the situation! The Elder praised him, saying, “His skill is indeed extraordinary!”

VI. No Need for Astonishment

[Original Text of the Koan]

Xiao Jingchun of Hunan was talented and learned and once wrote an inscription for a Seamless Stūpa. Chan Master Datong Ben used his words in answering the koan of the Seamless Stūpa: “Mists and rosy clouds arise behind it; stars and moon encircle its eaves and pillars.”

Chun lived at Yuelu Monastery and rigorously disciplined himself in practice. One night, while circumambulating the steps of the hall, he accidentally lost his footing and fell. A nearby monk helped him up, but he was so dazed that he no longer recognized people or events; he could not even understand the writings he had composed throughout his life.

When Chan Master Zha of Doushuai was first traveling in search of teachers, he passed through Yuelu and heard an elder monastic speak of Chun’s case. Zha was startled and said: “If, in this life, I investigate Chan yet fail to realize the mind-ground, I will be just like Chun. One accidental fall can have such consequences; how much more so after passing through the obscurity between lives!”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

Even if one has realized the mind-ground, if one’s supernormal powers have not yet manifested, one may still fall, suffer a concussion, and fail to recognize people or events.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

In fact, Chan Master Zha had no need for alarm. Let alone one who has not realized the mind-ground: “Even if one has realized the mind-ground, if one’s supernormal powers have not yet manifested, one may still fall, suffer a concussion, and fail to recognize people or events.” (The Elder’s marginal note)

Śākyamuni Buddha’s Dharma is itself a teaching of lotuses blooming in fire. If supernormal powers have not yet manifested in this life, there is still the next life. What matters is to maintain pure and correct faith, make earnest vows, and carry out practice without retreat. Look at the conduct of Chan Master Zhixian:

Chan Master Xiangyan Zhixian of Dengzhou was a native of Qingzhou. Disgusted with worldly life, he left his parents and traveled about in search of the Way. While he was with Baizhang, his nature and intellect were keen, but he was unable to attain realization through investigating Chan. After Baizhang passed away, he went to study under Guishan. Guishan asked him: “I have heard that, under our late teacher Baizhang, when asked one question you could answer ten, and when asked ten questions you could answer a hundred. This is merely your cleverness and quickness—conceptual interpretations and conscious thoughts, the root of birth and death.”

“Before your parents gave birth to you, say one phrase that expresses your original face.” At this question, the master was utterly at a loss. Returning to his quarters, he searched through all the writings he had previously read, hoping to find one phrase with which to reply, but in the end he could find none. He sighed to himself: “A painted cake cannot satisfy hunger.” Again and again he begged Guishan to explain it to him, but Guishan said: “If I were to explain it to you, you would later curse me. What I say is mine; in the end, it has nothing to do with you.”

The master then burned all the writings he had previously studied. He said, “In this life I will not study the Buddhadharma. I will simply become a monk who goes on almsrounds and eats his porridge and rice, so that I need not weary my mind and spirit.” Weeping, he bade Guishan farewell and went directly to Nanyang, where he saw the relics of National Teacher Huizhong and settled there.

With his intelligence, quick wit, and learning, it would have been easy for him to accomplish great things in worldly life. Did he truly become attached to worldly pursuits and cease studying the Buddhadharma? Absolutely not! He never forgot for a single moment the huatou, “Before your parents gave birth to you.” Not only did he not cling to worldly dharmas (“I will simply become a monk who goes on almsrounds and eats his porridge and rice”), but he also did not cling to the Buddhadharma (“In this life I will not study the Buddhadharma”). Casting all these hindrances behind him (“so that I need not weary my mind and spirit”)—this is genuine “when practice arises, conceptual understanding ceases”! What was the result? Read on:

One day, while clearing away grass and brush, he casually tossed a piece of tile rubble, which struck some bamboo and made a sound. He suddenly awakened. Hastily returning, he bathed and burned incense, then bowed from afar toward Guishan in praise: “Your Reverence’s great compassion surpasses even that of my parents. If you had explained it to me at that time, how could there have been today’s realization?” He then composed this verse: “With one strike, all that I knew is forgotten; / Further cultivation is no longer needed. / In every movement, the ancient path is revealed; / I do not fall into the mechanism of silent stillness. / Everywhere there are no traces; / My deportment lies beyond sound and form. / Those who have realized the Way in all quarters / All say this is the highest capacity.”

When Guishan heard of this, he said to Yangshan: “This disciple has penetrated it thoroughly.” Yangshan replied: “This has been composed through the workings of mind and consciousness. Let me personally examine him.” Later, when Yangshan saw the master, he said: “The Reverend has praised you, younger brother, for realizing the great matter. Try explaining it.” The master recited the preceding verse. Yangshan said: “This was formed from the retention of your former habits. If you have genuine awakening, say something else.”

The master composed another verse: “Last year’s poverty was not true poverty; / This year’s poverty is true poverty. / Last year, though poor, I still had enough ground to plant an awl; / This year, even an awl has no place.” Yangshan said: “I grant that you understand the Tathāgata Chan, but you have not even dreamed of Patriarchal Chan.” The master composed another verse: “I have one device: / I blink my eyes and look at it. / If someone does not understand, / I call out to a novice monk instead.” Yangshan then reported to Guishan: “Rejoice! Younger brother Zhixian has realized Patriarchal Chan.”

The World-Honored One’s Buddhadharma is a lotus blooming in fire. If one’s faith is pure and correct and one’s vows are earnest, the power of one’s vows will surely overcome karmic power. Once one opens to one’s original nature and thoroughly realizes the mind-ground, one will no longer retreat.

Bodhisattvas below the seventh bhūmi still undergo the obscurity between lives. Only from the eighth bhūmi onward does one truly transcend birth and death: only then can one respond to circumstances with immeasurable, boundless wondrous functioning amid original nonexistence, and only then can one liberate immeasurable, boundless sentient beings in accordance with conditions where, originally, no sentient beings exist.

If one truly fears being unable to accomplish this within a single lifetime and does not dare to temper oneself in the ocean of birth and death, the World-Honored One has also prepared a stable great ship for us: let go of everything in this world and uphold the sacred name “Namo Amitābha Buddha.” One will certainly attain rebirth in the Western Land of Ultimate Bliss. Alas! I only fear that you will still be unwilling to recite the Buddha’s name honestly.

VII. Lotus Sutra Bodhisattva

[Original Text of the Koan]

While Minister Lü Shen was serving in government, he drafted a letter of invitation on a day of leave, intending to invite Yan Fazhi for a vegetarian meal.

The next day, Yan indeed arrived at the minister's residence and sat in the hall. As Minister Shen was about to come out to meet him, he thought to himself, “Should I bow, or should I not?” Yan called out loudly, “Old Lü, how you do fuss about! Come out quickly! Bowing is fine, and not bowing is fine.” Minister Shen then bowed to him respectfully. After the meal, he asked about future fortune and misfortune. Yan asked for a brush and wrote the two large characters “Bozhou” for him, without explaining why. Later, after being dismissed as prime minister, he became prefect of

Bozhou. While sorting through documents, he suddenly saw those two characters before him and only then understood the earlier prophecy.

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

After awakening to the Way, diligently eliminate habitual tendencies, and spiritual powers will naturally arise. But do not become attached to spiritual powers, lest you be unable to return home and sit securely, and instead become a demon.

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

Yan Fazhi was none other than the great bodhisattva Fazhi Zhiyan. The Record of the Lamp contains an account of him:

The great bodhisattva Fazhi Zhiyan was a member of the Xu family of Shouchun. In his early twenties, he traveled to the Eastern Capital and was subsequently ordained at Qijuzhi Monastery, where he remained for a long time in the lecture hall. One day, while reading the Record of Yunmen, he suddenly attained realization. Before long, his knowledge of past lives opened. He would talk and laugh to himself, his lips continually muttering, day after day. It was said that he recited the Lotus Sūtra, and he was therefore given this name.

Prime Minister Lord Lü Xu asked about the essential meaning of Buddhadharma. The master said, “Originally, there is not a single thing; yet a single flavor becomes true.”

Wang Zhi of Jixian asked, “What is the Patriarch's intention in coming from the West?” The master said, “Within the shadows of green mountains, blue is splashed forth; the lofty pagoda chants and shakes the dawn wind.” He also said, “Please have Fazhi burn incense.” The master said, “Do not seek it through fasting and precepts; do not seek it beside the Buddha.”

Xu Yue, an assistant instructor at the Imperial Academy, asked about the Patriarch's intention in coming from the West. The master said, “That on the east side of the street.” Xu said, “I do not understand.” The master said, “Three kinds of people cannot understand it.”

A monk asked, “Are there Buddhas in the world?” The master said, “Mañjuśrī is in the monastery.”

Someone asked the master, “Ordinary or holy?” He then raised his hand and said, “I do not dwell here.”

On the twenty-third day of the eleventh month of the wuxu year of the Qingli era, as he was about to pass away, he told those around him, “Since immeasurable kalpas

ago, I have accomplished Shiduo lands, manifested bodies to propagate the teachings, and now return to the south." Having finished speaking, he passed away lying on his right side.

During a period of leave, Prime Minister Lord Lü Shen planned to write an invitation to ask the great bodhisattva Fazhi to come for a vegetarian meal. In fact, he had a matter for which he wished to seek his help. Yet the very next day, without having been invited, Yan Fazhi arrived and was already seated in the reception hall of Lü's residence.

As Lord Shen was about to come out to meet him, he weighed the matter to himself: Would it be better to bow to him, or not to bow? If I bow to him, I am a prime minister, above one person and below ten thousand; how can I lightly bow to another? But if I do not bow, considering the present situation at court, I still need something from him. What should I do?

The moment this thought arose, the great bodhisattva Fazhi knew what he was thinking. He therefore shouted loudly from the reception hall: "You fellow named Lü, you are truly indecisive! Come out quickly. It is fine to bow, and fine not to bow. What are you calculating for?"

This thoroughly subdued Lord Shen. "Ah! He knows that I wished to invite him, and he even knows what I am thinking. He is no ordinary person!" So he bowed with the utmost reverence. When the vegetarian meal was finished, Lord Shen asked about his future fortune and misfortune; this was the very reason he had wished to invite the great bodhisattva Fazhi. The bodhisattva said, "Bring me a brush!" He wrote the two large characters "Bozhou" and gave them to him, saying neither that they were auspicious nor that they were inauspicious. Lord Shen did not understand what "Bozhou" meant.

Not long afterward, Lord Shen was dismissed from his post as prime minister and demoted to serve as prefect of Bozhou. After taking office, he sorted through earlier documents and discovered the two characters "Bozhou" written by the great bodhisattva Fazhi. Only then did he understand the bodhisattva's earlier prophecy.

The great bodhisattva Fazhi naturally sported freely in spiritual powers, but those powers were not sought after. Master Yuanyin commented: "After awakening to the Way, diligently eliminate habitual tendencies, and spiritual powers will naturally arise. But do not become attached to spiritual powers, lest you be unable to return home and sit securely, and instead become a demon." This warns us later students not to become attached to spiritual powers. Spiritual powers may be encountered, but they cannot be sought. If one neglects the original ground and vainly seeks spiritual powers, that is a cause for entering the demonic path.

VIII. The Words Still Ring in My Ears

[Case Record]

Chan Master Zhenjing, having retired from Dongshan, traveled through Zhejiang. When he arrived at the place of Chan Master Qi of Langya, the assembly asked him to give an informal instruction. Zhenjing fearlessly criticized the divergent views and erroneous interpretations found in various quarters.

After leaving the seat, he saw Master Qi and said, “The abbot is here. Fortunately, you have not said very much.” [The Elder’s marginal note: “Your words are still ringing in our ears!”]

Master Qi said, “You have not said anything either.”

The two looked at each other, burst into laughter, and left.

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

It ended in a thoroughly embarrassing scene!

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

This Chan Master Zhenjing Kewen, instead of staying properly at his own Dharma center, went traveling in Zhejiang and made his way to the Dharma center of Chan Master Yongqi of Langya. Master Zhenjing was highly renowned. When everyone saw that he had arrived, they gathered together and invited him to give instruction. Yet Master Zhenjing, with no reservations whatsoever, criticized the words of the leading Chan masters of the time, dismissing them as divergent views and erroneous interpretations.

After finishing his criticism, he saw that Master Yongqi was also there. Master Zhenjing said, “Oh! You are here too. Fortunately, you have not usually said anything.” The meaning was perfectly clear: if you had said anything, I would have scolded you along with the rest. Master Yongqi replied, “You have not said anything either, have you?” The two looked at each other, laughed heartily, and left the gathering.

Although the reply, “You have not said anything either,” strikes the vital point, it is too mild. To reply, “Your words are still ringing in our ears!” (the Elder’s marginal note) would be as perfectly matched as a case and its lid, exactly to the point. Now let us substitute this reply and look again at the exchange: “Fortunately, you have not said anything. If you had, I would have scolded you along with the rest.” “Ha! The things you just said are still ringing in our ears!”

Everyone had originally wished to hear him give instruction, but instead they heard a torrent of scolding and were left utterly at a loss. Thus the Elder commented: “It ended in a thoroughly embarrassing scene!”

IX. Indomitable Perseverance

[Original Koan]

Master Guisheng of Ye County was severe, cold, and austere, and the monastics held him in awe. When Fushan Fayuan and Tianyi Yihuai were still members of the assembly, they went especially to seek his instruction. It was the depth of winter, with snow and bitter cold. Guisheng scolded and drove them away, even splashing water over the corridor lodgings, soaking their clothes. The other monks all left angrily, but Fayuan and Yihuai alone folded up their bedding, arranged their clothes, and again sat in meditation in the corridor.

When Guisheng came by, he scolded them: “If you still do not leave, I will beat you!” Fayuan stepped forward and said, “The two of us have come thousands of li especially to seek instruction in Chan from you, Master. How could we leave merely because we were splashed with a ladle of water? Even if you beat us to death, we will not go.” Guisheng laughed and said, “Since you two wish to study Chan, then go and take up residence.” Later, he appointed Fayuan as the monastery cook.

The assembly found the austerity unbearable. Once, when Guisheng had gone out to the estate, Fayuan secretly took the key, fetched oil and flour, and made five-flavor congee. Just as the congee was ready, Guisheng unexpectedly returned to the hall. After the congee had been eaten, he sat outside the hall and summoned the monastery cook. When Fayuan arrived, he immediately said, “I did indeed take oil and flour to cook congee. I willingly ask the Master to punish me.” Guisheng had the value calculated, assessed Fayuan’s robes and utensils as repayment in full, gave him thirty blows with the staff, and expelled him from the monastery.

Fayuan stayed in the marketplace and asked Dharma friends to plead for his pardon, but Guisheng would not consent. He then said, “If I may not be allowed to return, I only ask to enter the Master’s room with the assembly.” This too was refused. One day, while going out into town, Guisheng saw Fayuan standing alone before an inn and said, “This is the monastery’s gatehouse corridor. You have stayed here all this time; have you ever paid rent?” He ordered him to calculate what he owed and collect it. Fayuan showed no displeasure; he took up his bowl in the marketplace, begged for money, and repaid it. Another day, Guisheng saw him begging with his bowl. Upon returning, he said to the assembly, “Fayuan truly intends to study Chan.” He then called him back.

[The Elder's Marginal Comment]

Can there be anyone today who studies Chan and cultivates the Way with such unyielding perseverance through every setback?! No wonder Chan Master Fayuan later became a great master.

[Dissecting the Steelyard Weight]

Chan Master Guisheng of Ye County had penetrating Dharma vision, but his disposition was stern, aloof, and austere. Many people feared him.

When Fushan Fayuan—who later succeeded Ye County Guisheng—and Tianyi Yihuai—who later succeeded Xuedou Xian—went to seek instruction from Ye County Guisheng, there were many people there. It was winter, snow was falling, and the weather was bitterly cold. Master Ye County Guisheng drove people away. Not only did he scold them, but he also splashed water over the passageway, soaking everyone's clothes.

Many people were quite dissatisfied with Master Guisheng's conduct and left one after another. Only Fushan Fayuan and Tianyi Yihuai remained. If he would not let them stay in the rooms, they would arrange their clothing and bedding and stay in the passageway, sitting in meditation there.

Master Ye County Guisheng drove them away, saying sternly, "If you still will not leave, I will beat you!" Fushan Fayuan stepped forward and replied, "The two of us have traveled thousands of li especially to learn Chan from you. How could we leave merely because we were splashed with a ladle of water? If you wish to beat us, then beat us; even if you beat us to death, we will not go!" Master Guisheng laughed. "Since you two wish to study Chan, then go and take up residence." Thus the two stayed. Later, Master Guisheng also appointed Fushan Fayuan as monastery cook.

The assembly lived in great hardship. While the old master was away, Fayuan, the monastery cook, secretly took the key and fetched oil and flour to make a pot of five-flavor congee for everyone, improving their fare a little. But just as the congee was finished, the old master returned, and the matter was discovered. After everyone had eaten the congee, the old master sat outside the hall and sent someone to summon Fayuan.

Fushan Fayuan had no choice but to come and confess, asking to be punished. The old master had someone calculate the value of the pot of five-flavor congee, appraised Fushan Fayuan's robes and implements to compensate for it, gave him thirty blows with the staff, and expelled him from the monastery. Fayuan asked others to plead for him, but the old master would not allow it.

He again asked the old master, “If I cannot stay at the monastery, may I at least come simply to listen to Chan teachings?” The old master still refused. One day, as the old master went out, he saw Chan Master Fayuan standing beneath the corridor before the monastery and demanded rent from him for standing in the corridor. Fushan Fayuan showed no displeasure. He went into the streets to beg for money and repay him. When the old master saw Fayuan begging in the streets to pay the debt, he returned and said to everyone, “It seems that he sincerely wishes to study Chan.” He then permitted him to return to the monastery.

The Elder sighed, “Can there be anyone today who studies Chan and cultivates the Way with such unyielding perseverance through every setback?!” He praised Chan Master Fayuan: “No wonder Chan Master Fayuan later became a great master.” Fushan Fayuan not only inherited the Dharma lineage of Chan Master Guisheng of Ye County, of the Linji school, but also deeply understood the essential teaching of the Caodong school and continued its lineage. Had he not become a great master, how could this have been possible? His connection with the Caodong school was roughly as follows:

The two Chan masters Fushan Fayuan and Langya Huijue—mentioned earlier, a successor of Chan Master Fenyang Shanzhao of the Linji school—had both remained for a long time under Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan of the Caodong school and thoroughly understood the essential teaching of the Dongshan lineage. Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan once sighed, “The one who will revive the Dongshan lineage will be either Fayuan or Huijue.” Yet both men were descendants of the Linji school and could not inherit the Caodong lineage.

According to The Compendium of the Five Lamps: When Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan was eighty years old, he lamented that there was no one capable of succeeding him. He therefore composed a verse and, together with leather shoes and a cloth robe, sent it to Chan Master Fushan Fayuan, asking him to seek a suitable Dharma vessel. The verse reads: “The grass atop Yangguang Mountain / awaits your discerning appraisal. / Where an uncommon shoot luxuriantly flourishes, / its deep and hidden roots are firmly established.” At the end of the verse he wrote: “The one who receives the Dharma must remain hidden among the assembly for ten years before expounding it.” Fayuan bowed and accepted the charge.

Many years later, Chan Master Fushan Fayuan finally found for Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan an outstanding successor: Touzi Yiqing.

The Compendium of the Five Lamps says: “In the tenth generation after Qingyuan, Chan Master Touzi Yiqing of Shuzhou was a Dharma successor of Chan Master Dayang Xuan. He was a son of the Li family of Qingshe. At seven years of age he was

exceptionally intelligent. He left home at Miaoxiang Monastery, passed the examination on the scriptures, and received full ordination. He studied the Treatise on the Hundred Dharmas. Before long, he sighed, 'The path of three immeasurable eons is far; what benefit is there in confining myself?' He therefore went to Luoyang to hear lectures on the Avataṃsaka, whose meaning seemed to him like beads strung on a thread. Once, while reading a bodhisattva's verse in the various monastic groves, he came to the words 'mind itself and intrinsic nature' and suddenly awakened. He said, 'The Dharma is apart from words and letters; how can it be expounded in lectures?' He immediately abandoned them and traveled among the Chan assemblies."

At that time Chan Master Yuanjian, namely Fushan Fayuan, was residing at Huisheng Cliff. One night he dreamed that he was raising a blue hawk, which he took as an auspicious sign. At dawn, the master arrived, and Yuanjian received him with reverence. He instructed him to contemplate the case of a non-Buddhist's question to the Buddha: "I do not ask about words; I do not ask about no words." After three years, one day Yuanjian asked, "Do you remember the huatou? Try to bring it up." As the master was about to reply, Yuanjian covered his mouth.

The master immediately attained great awakening and bowed in homage. Yuanjian said, "Have you wondrously awakened to the profound mystery?" The master replied, "Even if I have, I must spit it out." At the time, the attendant Zi was standing nearby and said, "Qing, the Avataṃsaka lecturer, is today like a sick man breaking into a sweat." The master turned to look at him and said, "Shut that dog's mouth. If you keep babbling, I shall vomit at once." Thereafter, another three years passed. From time to time Yuanjian set forth to him the essential teaching of the Dongshan lineage, and he accorded wondrously with it all.

Yuanjian entrusted him with Dayang's portrait, leather shoes, and cloth robe, instructing him: "Continue that lineage for me. Do not remain here long; guard and uphold it well." He then wrote a verse to send him off: "Mount Sumeru stands in the vast emptiness; / the sun and moon revolve in support of it. / The many peaks gradually lean upon it; / the white clouds then shift and change. / The wind of Shaolin rises through the groves; / the curtains of Caoxi's caves are drawn aside. / A golden phoenix roosts in a dragon's nest; / how could imperial moss be crushed by cart wheels?" He instructed him to rely upon Chan Master Yuantong Xiu.

When the master arrived there, he asked no questions and sought no instruction, but merely loved to sleep. The monastery officers reported to Yuantong, "There is a monk in the hall who sleeps every day. The monastery regulations should be applied." Yuantong asked, "Who is it?" They replied, "Senior Monk Qing." Yuantong said, "Not yet. Let me examine the matter." He then dragged his staff into the hall

and found the master asleep. Striking the bed, he rebuked him: “Here we have no idle food for a senior monk who, having eaten, sleeps.”

The master said, “What does the abbot instruct me to do?” Yuantong replied, “Why do you not go and study Chan?” The master said, “Fine food is not for a man already full.” Yuantong said, “But many people will not accept you, Senior Monk.” The master said, “What use would it be to wait until they did?” Yuantong asked, “Whom has the senior monk met?” The master replied, “Fushan.” Yuantong said, “No wonder you are so unyielding.” They then clasped hands and laughed, returning to the abbot’s quarters. From this time, his reputation in the Way became widely known. He first resided at Baiyun and later moved to Touzi.

How righteous was Chan Master Fushan Fayuan! No wonder the Elder praised him as one who “became a great master.”

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Related email:

1. The verse reads: “The grass atop Yangguang Mountain / awaits your discerning appraisal. / Where an uncommon shoot luxuriantly flourishes, / its deep and hidden roots are firmly established.”

* “The grass atop Yangguang Mountain / awaits your discerning appraisal.”—When Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan was eighty years old, he lamented that there was no one capable of succeeding him. He therefore composed a verse and, together with leather shoes and a cloth robe, sent it to Chan Master Fushan Fayuan, asking him to seek a suitable Dharma vessel.

* “Where an uncommon shoot luxuriantly flourishes, / its deep and hidden roots are firmly established.”—The one who receives the Dharma must remain hidden among the assembly for ten years before expounding it.

2. “Mount Sumeru stands in the vast emptiness; / the sun and moon revolve in support of it. / The many peaks gradually lean upon it; / the white clouds then shift and change. / The wind of Shaolin rises through the groves; / the curtains of Caoxi’s caves are drawn aside. / A golden phoenix roosts in a dragon’s nest; / how could imperial moss be crushed by cart wheels?”

* “Mount Sumeru stands in the vast emptiness; / the sun and moon revolve in support of it.”—Mount Sumeru represents the Buddhadharma, while the sun and moon represent the various schools and lineages.

* “The many peaks gradually lean upon it.”—The two men were both descendants of the Linji school and could not inherit the Caodong lineage.

* “The white clouds then shift and change.”—There was no one capable of succeeding him, so he composed a verse and, together with leather shoes and a cloth robe, sent it to Chan Master Fushan Fayuan, asking him to seek a suitable Dharma vessel.

* “The wind of Shaolin rises through the groves; / the curtains of Caoxi’s caves are drawn aside.”—Although their branches differ, they are all of the same Chan lineage.

* “A golden phoenix roosts in a dragon’s nest.”—He instructed him to rely upon Chan Master Yuantong Xiu.

* “How could imperial moss be crushed by cart wheels?”—When the master arrived there, he asked no questions and sought no instruction, but merely loved to sleep. The monastery officers reported this to Yuantong...

3. Yuanjian said, “Have you wondrously awakened to the profound mystery?” The master replied, “Even if I have, I must spit it out.” At the time, the attendant Zi was standing nearby and said, “Qing, the Avataṃsaka lecturer, is today like a sick man breaking into a sweat.” The master turned to look at him and said, “Shut that dog’s mouth. If you keep babbling, I shall vomit at once.”

* “Have you wondrously awakened to the profound mystery?”—Have you awakened?

* “Even if I have, I must spit it out.”—Eliminate every trace of awakening.

*Qing Huayan today is like a sick person breaking into a sweat. — This is language used to speak of awakening. — The way of words is cut off.

*Shut that dog's mouth. If you keep chattering, I shall vomit at once. — This language, too, must be swept away. — The path of mental activity is cut off.

What do the above three points mean?

(Editor's note: The passages following “*” are Teacher lvm's answers to three questions.)

X. Which Is Lighter and Which Is Heavier?

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Wude of Fenyang once said to the assembly: “Last night I dreamed that my deceased parents were seeking wine, meat, and paper money. I cannot avoid following worldly custom, so I shall prepare these offerings for them.” The preparations were made in the storeroom hall. An altar was set up according to

worldly rites; wine was poured, meat was offered, and paper money was burned. When this was finished, he asked the temple administrators and senior monastics to gather and distribute the remaining dishes. They declined. Wude sat alone at the banquet, eating and drinking as if nothing were amiss.

The monks criticized him, saying, “A monk who drinks wine and eats meat—how can he serve as a model for others?” They all packed their belongings and left. Only Ciming, Dayu, Quan Dadao, and five or six others remained. The following day, Wude ascended the Dharma seat and said: “So many idle spirits and wild ghosts were sent packing by no more than a platter of wine and meat and a couple of strings of paper money. The Lotus Sūtra says: ‘In this assembly there are no branches or leaves; there are only the steadfast and genuine.’” He then descended from the seat.

[The Elder’s Marginal Comment]

Worldly people know only that cultivation requires a vegetarian diet, but do not know that its purpose is to refrain from killing. Thus, some are quite devout in eating vegetarian food yet are even more harmful to others. They do not understand that the precept lies in the stirring of the mind: once the mind stirs, the essential substance of the precepts is completely lost. It does not lie in how strictly one maintains outward appearances.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

The koan and the marginal comment are both easy to understand, so there is no need to elaborate further. I will explain only a few individual words and phrases:

“He asked the temple administrators and senior monastics to gather and distribute the remaining dishes. They declined.” — Chan Master Shanzhao of Fenyang asked the monastics responsible for the temple’s various affairs to eat the wine and meat that had been offered in the rite, but everyone excused themselves and refused to eat it.

“They all packed their belongings and left.” — They gathered up their luggage and departed.

This koan does not encourage everyone to drink wine and eat meat. Rather, it urges us not to forget the fundamental purpose of studying Buddhism. Compared with this, which is lighter and which is weightier? To make the comparison only in theory is like scratching an itch through one's boot: it cannot strike home deeply.

Chan Master Fenyang vividly placed this concrete situation before the assembly and let them make their own choice. He did not hesitate to cast himself completely into the weeds; truly, he was a great master of extraordinary stature. Of the entire

assembly, only six or seven were able to see through it. No wonder that, after everyone had left, Chan Master Fenyang said: “In this assembly there are no branches or leaves; there are only the steadfast and genuine.” Whatever the tree, it has many branches and leaves but few fruits.

The Elder’s comment not only points out that the purpose of a vegetarian diet is to refrain from killing; it also identifies a phenomenon found today—some people are “quite devout in eating vegetarian food yet are even more harmful to others.” Why is this so? Because they have forgotten the fundamental purpose of studying Buddhism and have taken the branches and leaves for the fruit. After I first received the Heart-of-Heart Dharma, I once asked the Elder for the “Vajra Samaya Precepts.”

The Elder said, “Oh! It is good that you seek the precepts. I will give you only one precept: the very arising of a thought is a violation of the precepts!” With this single statement, the Elder addressed the root: the purpose of the precepts is to guard the mind. Just as the Elder said in his comment: “The precept lies in the stirring of the mind: once the mind stirs, the essential substance of the precepts is completely lost. It does not lie in how strictly one maintains outward appearances.”

Nor does the Elder’s comment mean that outward observance of the precepts is unnecessary. Rather, it is meant to remind us: between the essential substance of the precepts and their outward forms, which is lighter and which is weightier?

XI. What Is the Meaning of Marginal Notes?

[Original Text of the Koan]

While the monk Zhenjing was traveling, he and two other monks arrived at Guyin. Xue Datou asked, “When three people travel together, one of them must be wise. Which one is the wise one?” The two monks had nothing to say. Zhenjing, standing in the lower position, immediately gave a shout in response. Xue raised his fist in a wrestling stance. Zhenjing said, “There is no need to test me further.” Xue dragged out his staff to drive them away. (For Xue, see Chan Master Shimen Cizhao.)

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

Turn your head and look!

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

The wording of this koan is easy to understand, so there is no need to recount it point by point. Let us first discuss the sentence in the parentheses at the end:

“Xue meets Chan Master Shimen Cizhao”—the Xue Datou mentioned here is Chan Master Shimen Cizhao; in ancient usage, the characters xian ( ) and jian ( ) were interchangeable. Shimen Cizhao was also Guyin Yuncong, whom the Records of the Lamp calls “Chan Master Yuncong Cizhao of Guyin Mountain in Xiangzhou.” People in ancient times had both personal names and sobriquets: Yuncong was his personal name, and Cizhao his sobriquet.

Shimen and Guyin are both place names. Perhaps his lay surname was Xue, and his head was somewhat larger than those of ordinary people; therefore, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, the author of Armory of the Chan School, called him “Xue Datou.” That he could use such a familiar nickname shows that the two were well acquainted and close.

“Zhenjing, standing in the lower position” means that the monk Zhenjing was standing in the subordinate place. Some say that the Elder’s marginal note, “Turn your head and look!”, means “look toward the lower position.” Look at the monk Zhenjing in the lower position: he is the “one wise person.” This interpretation also makes sense, but it may not necessarily be the intended meaning.

The koan says: “Xue raised his fist in a wrestling stance. Zhenjing said, ‘There is no need to test me further.’ Xue dragged out his staff to drive them away.” If Chan Master Zhenjing had replaced “There is no need to test me further” with “Turn your head and look,” it would have perfectly met and encompassed Xue’s “wrestling stance.” If so, even if Xue Datou had wanted to drive them away, I fear he would not have been able to draw out his staff. The Elder’s marginal note, “Turn your head and look!”, supplies an answer for Chan Master Zhenjing.

XII. Examine It Closely

Original Text of the Koan

Chan Master Defu of Yunding Mountain was invited by the military commander of Chengdu Prefecture to take the seat and teach at his headquarters. At that time, a commander of the military band came forward, made obeisance, rose, and, glancing back at the mounting platform before the street, said, “I will not ask about swallowing up all the water of the Western River in one gulp. But would you please swallow the mounting platform before the street, Master?” The Master spread out both hands and sang, “Bring it here, played delicately.” At these words, the military-band commander had an awakening.

The Elder’s Marginal Comment

It is so, but it is rather slight!

Sawing Open the Scale Weight

Chan Master Defu of Yunding Mountain was a Dharma heir of Chan Master Huguo Zhiyuan of the Caodong school. One day, the commander-in-chief of Chengdu Prefecture invited Chan Master Defu to take the seat and teach at the military headquarters. A commander of the military band came forward and made obeisance to the Chan Master. When he had finished, he pointed to the mounting platform and asked, “Chan speaks of ‘swallowing up all the water of the Western River in one gulp’; I will not ask about anything so large.

“But can you, Master, swallow this little mounting platform in one gulp?” Chan Master Defu spread out both hands and, as though playing military music, sang, “Bring it here, played delicately.” At these words, the commander was unexpectedly awakened.

Some have explained “Bring it here, played delicately” as “Grind it fine. Bring it here!” Here, jiang means “take.” You grind it into a fine powder and bring it to me! This explanation is quite reasonable. Yet these words are obviously rather weighty; they are not “slight” at all. Why, then, did the Elder comment, “It is so, but it is rather slight!”?

You must understand that the Chan Master said it in song: “played delicately” means to play music carefully and attentively. “First bring me the military music that you have played with such care, and then I will swallow the mounting stone.” Military music is merely sound; it has no appearance of size, water, or stone. How could it be brought here? Yet at these words the commander unexpectedly entered into the formless. He was indeed a person of exceptionally sharp faculties!

Ha ha! To bring the sound of military music here is indeed “slight.”

XIII. Dying After a Single Insult

[Original Text of the Koan]

Ziqing, the Chief Librarian, was from Shu. Well known in Chan monasteries, he had studied under such great elders as Zhenru, Huitang, and Pujue. Traveling to Mount Lu and then entering the capital, he went to see Chan Master Yuantong of Fayun. He met Master Xiu on the road, and the two traveled together to Fayun. Xiu was admitted to the Chan hall and, on Ziqing’s behalf, petitioned Yuantong. Yuantong instructed them to lodge him elsewhere for the time being; when a berth became available there, he could enter the Chan hall.

While Qing was staying at Zhihai, he happened to fall ill. Xiu wished to visit and ask after his condition, but could not obtain leave from the monastery, so he secretly

left Zhihai to see Qing. Qing wrote to Yuantong, reporting that Xiu had violated the rules by coming and going without permission. When Yuantong received the letter and learned of the matter, he fiercely rebuked him during the evening instruction: “This is truly the conduct of a petty person! Out of moral obligation, he risked leaving the monastery to inquire after your illness. Yet you repay him by informing against him. Is this what an upright and honorable person would do?” When Qing heard this, he stopped breathing. Everyone in the Chan monasteries said that Qing had died after being rebuked by Yuantong.

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

With such conduct, can Qing the Chief Librarian still be called a Chan practitioner?! How tragic!

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

A chief librarian is the monastic official responsible for managing a monastery’s collection of Buddhist scriptures. In the past, unlike today, access to scriptures was not so easy. Ziqing, as chief librarian, had the convenience of reading the scriptures; added to this, he was intelligent and quick-witted. It was only natural that he would become “well known in Chan monasteries.”

He was not only versed in the scriptures but also wished to study Chan. He had already “studied under such great elders as Zhenru, Huitang, and Pujue.” This time, he was going to study with Chan Master Yuantong of Fayun. All the masters he visited were renowned. On the road he met Master Xiu, and the two traveled together. But when they arrived, only one berth remained.

The monastery allowed Master Xiu to stay and study Chan, but there was no place for Qing the Chief Librarian. On Qing’s behalf, Master Xiu petitioned Chan Master Yuantong, asking him to allow Qing to stay and study Chan as well. The master said, “First lodge elsewhere. When a berth becomes available here, come back to study Chan.” Qing therefore had no choice but to lodge at the monastery of Chan Master Zhihai nearby.

Qing the Chief Librarian fell ill. When Master Xiu heard the news, he wanted to visit him, but he could never obtain leave. He therefore secretly slipped out and went to Chan Master Zhihai’s place to see Qing. Afterward, Qing wrote a letter to Chan Master Yuantong, accusing Master Xiu of breaking the rules by secretly coming and going.

When Chan Master Yuantong received the letter and learned the full circumstances, he fiercely rebuked Qing the Chief Librarian during the evening instruction: “This is truly the conduct of a petty person! Out of moral obligation, he risked leaving the

monastery to inquire after your illness. Yet you repay him by informing against him. Is this what an upright and honorable person would do?" Upon hearing that Chan Master Yuantong had rebuked him, Qing the Chief Librarian was overwhelmed with shame and soon died. The matter spread throughout the Chan monasteries, and everyone said that Qing the Chief Librarian had been rebuked to death by Chan Master Yuantong.

The Elder's marginal note says: "With such conduct, can Qing the Chief Librarian still be called a Chan practitioner?! How tragic!" Indeed, people like Qing the Chief Librarian are always calculating selfish schemes that harm others for their own benefit. Even if they can read the Tripiṭaka and the twelve divisions of the scriptures, will it not be difficult for them to attain a breakthrough in Chan practice? Such people think highly of themselves, yet their hearts are sordid. They have no moral integrity, stop at nothing, and use others as stepping-stones for their own advancement. In the end, they will never meet a good fate.

XIV. Honoring Its Lofty Integrity

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Mingshui Xun of Fuzhou was serving in the attendants' quarters at Fayun when Chan Master Daolin Lin arrived to take up residence. The abbot specially offered tea for the newcomers, and Xun personally went to the quarters to invite him. Lin happened to be absent. A fellow traveler who shared Lin's sleeping platform said, "You may go; when he returns, I will invite him for you." Xun left, but the monk happened to forget. After the meal, the drum was sounded to summon everyone for tea, but Lin did not come.

Yuantong asked, "Is the newcomer here?" They hastened to summon him, and Lin arrived. Yuantong ordered him to leave his seat and stand before the assembly, then reproved him: "The monastery has specially prepared tea to observe the courtesies of the Chan community. Why have you been so negligent as not to come on time?" Lin said that he had just heard the drum but was suddenly seized by an urgent need to relieve himself and could not hurry over.

Yuantong rebuked him: "My drum is not croton seeds. Does its beating make you defecate?" Xun stepped forward and said, "It was I who forgot to invite him. I should leave the monastery." At that time, the fellow traveler stepped out from the assembly and said, "This has nothing to do with the attendant or the newcomer. I should not have undertaken to invite him on his behalf and then forgotten. I should leave the monastery in their place." Yuantong commended their moral spirit and pardoned them.

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

Should not Chan practitioners possess such moral spirit and loyalty?

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

This koan, too, is an account from Chan Master Fayun Yuantong's place. If the preceding koan concerned the punishment of wrongdoing, this one concerns the rewarding of goodness.

When Chan Master Daolin Lin came to take up residence, Chan Master Fayun Yuantong specially invited the newcomers for tea. The attendant, Chan Master Mingshui Xun, personally went to the quarters where Chan Master Lin was staying to notify him that he was expected to attend the tea gathering. Lin happened to be out. A Chan monk who had arrived with Lin—their fellow traveler—also lived in the same quarters and shared the sleeping platform with him.

Seeing Attendant Xun waiting for Chan Master Lin, he said to him, "You need not wait any longer; go back. When he returns, I will tell him that you came and invited him for tea." After Attendant Xun left, the fellow-traveling monk forgot about the matter.

After the meal, the drum sounded, summoning those who had been invited to tea. Chan Master Lin did not know that he was among those invited, so naturally he could not come. Seeing that he had not arrived, Master Yuantong asked, "Have all the newcomers arrived?" Everyone saw that Chan Master Lin was absent and quickly summoned him.

Master Yuantong told him to leave his seat and stand before the assembly, where he publicly reprimanded him: "The monastery has specially prepared tea for you, to observe the courtesies of the Chan community. Why have you been so negligent as not to come on time?" Chan Master Lin replied that he had heard the drum just then but was suddenly seized by an urgent need to relieve himself, and so had not arrived in time.

Master Yuantong rebuked him: "My drum is not croton seeds. Can beating it make you defecate?" Seeing the old master become angry and fearing that he might send Chan Master Lin away, Attendant Xun came forward to mediate: "It was I who forgot to invite him. If anyone is to be punished, it should be me. Send me out of the monastery."

Only then did the fellow-traveling monk remember that he had forgotten to convey the message. He stepped forward to explain what had happened: "This is not the fault of the attendant or the newcomer. I should not have forgotten what I promised to do. Do not send the two of them away; if anyone is to be sent away, let it be me."

Master Yuantong admired their character and loyalty, and so forgave all three of them.

The Elder's marginal note reads: "Should not Chan practitioners possess such moral spirit and loyalty?" It is followed by a question mark. Is it praise or criticism? In fact, it need not be either praise or criticism; rather, it is a warning meant to awaken us.

Consider this: if Chan Master Lin already knew what had happened when he arrived, then, in order to shield Attendant Xun and the fellow-traveling monk, he would rather have been expelled than reveal the truth. Thus he used an urgent need to relieve himself as an excuse and took the blame upon himself. Such moral spirit and loyalty would indeed be lofty. If this was the case, then the Elder's marginal note was praise.

But if Chan Master Lin did not know what had happened when he arrived, he should have been completely bewildered. He ought then to have stated that he knew nothing of the matter; his excuse of an urgent need to relieve himself would make no sense. Where, then, would the moral spirit and loyalty lie? If this was the case, the Elder's marginal note was criticism. The Elder is warning us: we must attend to the details and must not be so crude and careless.

XV. The Adamantine Nature of Śarīra Relics

[Original Koan Text]

When revered elders throughout the Chan world passed away, their entire bodies were cremated, yielding very many śarīra. Only Chan Master Zhenjing's śarīra were as large as beans, crystalline in five colors and exceptionally hard. Chan Master Zu of Gushan, Zhenjing's foremost disciple, collected many of them, placed them in a crystal bottle, and carried them with him as objects of veneration. When Miaoxi visited Gushan, he once tested them: placing one on an iron anvil, he raised a hammer and struck it. Both anvil and hammer were dented, yet the śarīra was unharmed. Was this not the result of Zhenjing's clear and thorough practice in ordinary life and his exceptional realization of the Way?

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

Can it be said that cultivation of the Way has no verification?!

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

Shu is a general term for beans. Chan Master Zhenjing's śarīra were as large as beans, crystalline in five colors and exceptionally hard—truly a rare thing.

Miaoxi was the self-designation of Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, the author of The Armory of the Chan School in this book. Because he lived at Miaoxi Hermitage, he followed the ancient custom of referring to himself by his place of residence. He personally tested them: he placed Chan Master Zhenjing's śarīra on an iron anvil and struck it with an iron hammer. Both the anvil and the hammer were marked by the blow, while the śarīra remained wholly intact. Thus he exclaimed: if Chan Master Zhenjing had not practiced clearly and thoroughly during his lifetime, and had not attained such exceptional realization of the Way, how could he have obtained these large, hard, five-colored śarīra?

Reading this, the Elder also exclaimed: "Can it be said that cultivation of the Way has no verification?!" Is this not proof that Chan Master Zhenjing succeeded in cultivating the Way?

Yet there is also a saying in the Chan tradition: "Ten hu of śarīra are not worth a single turning phrase."

Chan Master Daoying of Yunju once instructed an attendant to bring trousers to a hermit practitioner. The practitioner said, "I already have trousers born of my mother," and refused them. The master again sent the attendant to ask, "What did you wear before your mother gave birth?" The practitioner had no reply. Later, when he passed away, śarīra were found and presented to the master. The master said, "Even if you had obtained eight hu and four dou, it would not equal having offered one fine turning phrase at that time."

We later students are accustomed to following the course of words. On hearing śarīra mentioned, we become attached to śarīra; when turning phrases are mentioned, we become attached to turning phrases. This is precisely what is meant by: "Worldly people are careless. In the twelve periods of the day, they have never attended to the subtle continuous stream in the matter that is fundamentally their own; giving rise to great self-conceit, they become masters of karma, and ghosts come to borrow their dwelling." Let us look at the inscription that Layman Wujin, Zhang Shangying, wrote for Chan Master Zhan Tang's stūpa:

Śarīra are not mentioned in the writings of Confucius and Laozi. After the World-Honored One, the former Buddha, entered extinction, his disciples collected his śarīra, erected a stūpa, and made offerings to them. Zhaozhou Congshen had as many as ten thousand śarīra. In recent times, in the cases of Longqing Xian and Baizhang Su, wherever the smoke of cremation reached, śarīra were formed. Yet, generally speaking, those who leave home do so because birth and death is the great matter. If, when birth and death arrives, they do not know where they are headed, then they are not as good as an untroubled fellow in some remote village.

At the end of life, one's final instructions should be clear in every detail. The physical body of the four elements is provisionally compounded from various conditions. From the very beginning, how could śarīra possess any inherent nature? If one's pure conduct is immaculate, one's wholesome karma firm, one's spiritual luminosity vast and penetrating, and one foreknows the end of one's karmic recompense without alarm or fear, then the primary and dependent karmic recompenses will not differ by even a hair's breadth. Worldly people are careless. In the twelve periods of the day, they have never attended to the subtle continuous stream in the matter that is fundamentally their own; giving rise to great self-conceit, they become masters of karma, and ghosts come to borrow their dwelling. If this is so, how could they hope for śarīra to flow forth like pearls and for all their faculties to remain intact?

The sentence, "From the very beginning, how could śarīra possess any inherent nature?" is intended to highlight the fundamental essence. The sentence, "If one's pure conduct is immaculate, one's wholesome karma firm, one's spiritual luminosity vast and penetrating, and one foreknows the end of one's karmic recompense without alarm or fear, then the primary and dependent karmic recompenses will not differ by even a hair's breadth," is intended to point out wondrous functioning. We should understand that the formless Buddha-nature is the fundamental essence, while the visible śarīra are its wondrous functioning.

"A single turning phrase" reveals the fundamental essence completely, while "ten hu of śarīra" are precisely the wondrous functioning that arises from that essence. Of the fundamental essence and wondrous functioning, which is fundamental? Hence the saying: "Ten hu of śarīra are not worth a single turning phrase."

XVI. Receiving the Master's Strict Precepts

[Original Text of the Koan]

Xian Pengtou, a native of Jiangzhou, was an outstanding figure in the assembly of Chan Master Zhenru of Weishan. His understanding was clear, his responses keen and incisive, and his attainments surpassed those of his teacher. Yet his conduct was undisciplined, and the entire assembly despised him. Zhenru built a hut behind the abbot's quarters and had Xian live there alone. He was permitted to use only the small path passing in front of the abbot's quarters, and the other monks were forbidden to associate with him.

Two years later, he was appointed head monk and was authorized to hold the whisk and teach the Dharma. His teaching was far superior to that of others, and the entire assembly accordingly changed its view of him. Later, he went to Xingyang in Yingzhou, where, after several years, the Way flourished greatly. When he passed

into cessation, his physical body did not decay. Chan Master Yuanwu witnessed this while at Weishan. When Dahui visited Xingyang, he still had the opportunity to see Xian's physical body.

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

Had his teacher not disciplined him strictly, he would almost have wasted his entire life!

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

Xian Pengtou, a disciple of Chan Master Zhenru, was one of the most outstanding members of the assembly. His understanding was clear, his responses keen and incisive, and his attainments surpassed those of his teacher. However, his conduct was neither rigorous nor restrained, and everyone disliked him. Chan Master Zhenru disciplined him strictly, having him live alone in a small hut. He had to pass by the abbot's quarters whenever he entered or left, so that he could be kept under watch, and he was not permitted to associate with others.

Two years later, he was made head monk and taught the Dharma on his teacher's behalf. Xian Pengtou's teaching was exceptionally profound, and the assembly greatly benefited from the Dharma. Later, he became the head of the practice center at Xingyang in Yingzhou, which flourished magnificently within some ten years. After he entered cessation, his physical body did not decay. Chan Master Yuanwu Keqin, the teacher of Dahui Zonggao, personally witnessed this. Dahui Zonggao himself also saw Xian's physical body when he visited Xingyang.

If one's conduct is unrestrained and one makes oneself disliked everywhere, it will hinder the propagation of the Dharma. Had Xian Pengtou not been strictly disciplined by his teacher, few people would have wished to approach him. Therefore, the Elder commented: "Had his teacher not disciplined him strictly, he would almost have wasted his entire life!"

XVII. An Excellent Example for Future Generations

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Zhantang Zhun, a native of Xingyuan Prefecture, was the direct Dharma heir of Zhenjing. When the seat at Yunyan in Fenning was vacant, the prefectural governor asked Chan Master Sixin of Huanglong to recommend someone he knew to fill it. Sixin said, "Master Zhun can take up the post. I do not know him personally; I have only seen his 'Verse on Washing the Bowl,' which is excellent."

The governor said, “May I hear it?” Sixin recited: “Zhi, hu, zhe, ye! A patch-robed monk’s nostrils, his large head hanging down. If you do not understand, ask Elder Sister Wang of the eastern village.” The governor found this remarkable and, with full courtesy, earnestly invited Zhun, who did not decline. Throughout his life, he disciplined himself through frugality. Although he led disciples and propagated the Dharma, he did not alter the habits he had maintained while living among the assembly. After rising in the morning and going to the latrine, he used only a small ladle of hot water to wash his face, then used it again to wash his feet.

All his other personal use was generally of the same kind. As soon as the assembly had dispersed after the formal meeting, the abbot’s attendants and workers were treated no differently from passersby. He swept the ground and prepared tea himself. He possessed the bearing of the ancients and was truly an excellent model for later generations.

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

Those who cultivate the Way should indeed be diligent, frugal, respectful, and circumspect in this manner!

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

The Linji school passed through six generations to Chan Master Shishuang Chuyuan (Linji Yixuan Xinghua Cunjiang Nanyuan Huiyong Fengxue Yanzhao Shoushan Shennian Fenyang Shanzhao Shishuang Chuyuan), and then divided further into the Huanglong and Yangqi branches.

The Huanglong branch passed through three generations to Chan Master Zhantang Wenzhun (Shishuang Chuyuan Huanglong Huinan Zhenjing Kewen Zhantang Wenzhun); the Yangqi branch passed through four generations to Chan Master Yuanwu Keqin (Shishuang Chuyuan Yangqi Fanghui Baiyun Shouduan Wuzu Fayan Yuanwu Keqin).

The author of this book, The Armory of the Chan School, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, was a Dharma heir of Chan Master Yuanwu Keqin. In his early years, he studied Chan under Chan Master Zhantang Wenzhun. Before Zhantang entered parinirvāṇa, he instructed Dahui Zonggao: “After I am gone, you should see Qin of Sichuan; he will surely be able to bring your capacities and functions fully to completion.” Thus Dahui later went to study under Chan Master Yuanwu Keqin.

Chan Master Sixin of Huanglong was Zhantang’s Dharma uncle. He recommended Zhantang to preside over the Yunyan practice center on the strength of Zhantang’s “Verse on Washing the Bowl.” Although Zhantang became abbot, he did not change

his original nature of diligence, frugality, respectfulness, and circumspection. He used only a small ladle of water to wash his face, then used it to wash his feet.

As soon as the assembly had dispersed, he showed none of an abbot's airs, mingling with beginners and with the service staff alike. He personally did such work as sweeping the ground and preparing tea. Though he was an abbot, Chan Master Zhantang was diligent, frugal, humble, and careful. He put these qualities into practice himself, teaching more by example than by words. He was truly an excellent model for later students. Thus the Elder praised him: "Those who cultivate the Way should indeed be diligent, frugal, respectful, and circumspect in this manner!"

This "Verse on Washing the Bowl" is indeed excellent! Let us listen to it with understanding: "Zhi, hu, zhe, ye! A patch-robed monk's nostrils, his large head hanging down. If you do not understand, ask Elder Sister Wang of the eastern village."

XVIII. Samādhi Suited to Different Capacities

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Fozhao Gao of Fayun once retired to the Iron Arhat Monastery in Jingde. In its hall stood several wooden arhat statues. The capital was bitterly cold, so Gao took them and burned them, sitting by the fire until dawn. The next day, innumerable śarīra were found amid the ashes. The scriptural lecturers all regarded him as a non-Buddhist. But Fozhao belonged to the lineage of Danxia; he could not be assessed by ordinary eyes.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Fozhao Gao of Fayun was a fellow disciple of Chan Master Zhandang Wenzhun, who appears in the preceding koan. The Chan lamp records contain the following account of him:

Chan Master Fozhao Gao of Fayun, Dongjing, traveled about in his youth and visited Chan Master Ji of Yuantong. When he entered the master's room, Ji raised this case: "A monk asked Touzi, 'What is it like when one who has died the great death comes back to life?' Touzi said, 'You are not permitted to travel by night; you must arrive in daylight.' What does this mean?" The master replied, "Such great kindness is hard to repay." Ji was greatly pleased and appointed him head of the assembly. That evening, when he held the whisk and addressed the assembly, his responses were slow and halting, and the assembly laughed at him. The master was embarrassed. The next day, while serving tea in the monks' hall, he happened to knock a tea ladle

to the ground. Seeing the ladle bounce, he attained the samādhi of responding to circumstances…

Thereafter, Master Zhao's teaching resounded like echoes in an empty valley, and his utterances were like an empty bell answering a strike. Yet this "samādhi of responding to circumstances" was attained upon seeing a ladle bounce. This koan concerns the time when he was temporarily staying at the Iron Arhat Monastery in Jingde. There were several wooden arhat statues there. As the weather was extremely cold, Master Zhao burned the wooden statues for warmth, keeping the fire going with them throughout the night.

The next day, however, many śarīra were picked out of the ashes. Ha ha! That wooden arhats could yield śarīra when burned is indeed strange and cannot be explained by ordinary reasoning. Consequently, many scriptural lecturers regarded Master Zhao as a non-Buddhist. Chan Master Dahui Zonggao commented: "Fozhao belonged to the lineage of Danxia; he could not be assessed by ordinary eyes."

"Ordinary eyes," of course, refers to the eyes of those scriptural lecturers. What does "the lineage of Danxia" mean? Let us look again at the account in the Chan lamp records:

Chan Master Danxia Tianran of Dengzhou originally studied the Confucian classics and was about to go to Chang'an to sit for the civil-service examination. While lodging at an inn, he suddenly dreamed that white light filled the room. A diviner said, "It is an auspicious sign of comprehending emptiness." By chance, a Chan practitioner asked him, "Where are you going?" He replied, "I am going to sit for the civil-service examination."

The Chan practitioner said, "How does selecting officials compare with selecting a Buddha?" He asked, "Where should one go to select a Buddha?" The Chan practitioner said, "Right now, Chan Master Ma of Jiangxi has appeared in the world; that is the place for selecting Buddhas. You may go there." He therefore went directly to Jiangxi. As soon as he saw the patriarch, the master touched the front of his headcloth with his hand. The patriarch looked at him for a long while and said, "Shitou of Nanyue is your teacher." He hastened to Shitou and again presented his former intention.

Shitou said, "Go to the work shed!" The master bowed in thanks, entered the attendants' quarters, and in due course took up kitchen work for three years. One day, Shitou announced to the assembly, "Tomorrow we will clear the grass in front of the Buddha hall." The next day, all the assembly and novice attendants prepared hoes and spades to clear the grass. The master alone filled a basin with water, washed his head, and knelt before Shitou. When Shitou saw this, he laughed and immediately shaved his head.

He then gave him the precepts, but the master covered his ears and went out. Later, he went again to Jiangxi to visit Patriarch Ma. Before paying his respects, he entered the monks' hall and sat astride the neck of the holy monk statue. The assembly was shocked and hastily reported it to Patriarch Ma. The patriarch personally entered the hall, looked at him, and said, "My son is Tianran." The master immediately got down, bowed, and said, "I thank the master for bestowing a Dharma name upon me." Thus he was named Tianran.

The patriarch asked, "Where have you come from?" The master replied, "Shitou." The patriarch said, "The road to Shitou is slippery. Did it make you stumble?" The master replied, "Had I stumbled, I would not have come." He then traveled with his staff to observe the regions… At Huilin Monastery, when the weather was extremely cold, he took a wooden Buddha and burned it to warm himself. The monastery steward scolded him, saying, "How can you burn my wooden Buddha?" The master poked through the ashes with his staff and said, "I am burning it to obtain śarīra." The steward said, "How could a wooden Buddha have śarīra?" The master said, "Since it has no śarīra, bring two more for me to burn!" Thereafter, the steward's eyebrows and beard fell out.

This is the background of Chan Master Danxia. Later generations have discussed this koan of "Danxia Burns a Wooden Buddha" at great length, speaking variously of cold and warmth. Without avoiding a few entanglements, let us now hear a verse:

Verse on "Danxia Burns a Wooden Buddha"

How could a patriarch's ways permit childish play?

What have cold and warmth to do with it? It was merely to stop a child from crying.

Burning it, śarīra fill the whole of space, wholly revealing the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West.

Failing to recognize the subtlety of the Way, one's beard and eyebrows fall to the ground.

XIX. Lay Practitioner Huayan

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chen Guan of Yanping, style name Yingzhong, called himself the Huayan Lay Practitioner. An upright and unyielding official, he possessed the bearing and integrity of the ancients. He devoted himself to the Buddhist canon and was unmatched in discussion. Yet his investigation of Chan had not brought him great awakening; thus, he interpreted many Chan causes and conditions merely through

conceptual understanding. He deeply loved the Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Huinan and annotated nearly all of it, but he could not annotate only the phrase, “A vajra and a mud figure rub each other’s backs.” He once told someone, “This must have a source, but no one has yet known it.”

As the proverb says, “Before a person of great wisdom there are three feet of darkness.” This is indeed no falsehood.

[The Elder’s Marginal Comment]

It was plainly told to you—why do you not understand? Let me add another annotation for you: “The Eastern Mountain walks upon the water!”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Because the Huayan Lay Practitioner’s “investigation of Chan had not brought him great awakening,” he could naturally only “interpret Chan causes and conditions through conceptual understanding.” This was plainly like counting another person’s treasure, entirely unrelated to his own fundamental concern. Yet he dearly loved the Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Huinan and annotated it throughout, except that he could not set pen to paper on “A vajra and a mud figure rub each other’s backs.”

The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Huinan presumably refers to the recorded sayings of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan. Yet the present recorded sayings of Chan Master Huanglong contain no such account as “A vajra and a mud figure rub each other’s backs.” This may be due to differences among editions. Since the Huayan Lay Practitioner could not penetrate “A vajra and a mud figure rub each other’s backs,” his other annotations may likewise not have truly accorded with Huanglong’s intent.

At most, the Huayan Lay Practitioner was a scholar of Chan; he was not necessarily one awakened to Chan. He once said to someone, “This saying must have a source; it is simply that no one knows it.” He wanted to investigate its source—plainly, he was doing scholarship. Every word spoken by Chan Master Huanglong flowed from his vast and open heart, intended to set forth the Patriarchs’ meaning in its entirety. How could it be like this sort of textual investigation? Thus, his annotations may not have accorded with Huanglong’s intent. Since he loved textual investigation, let us investigate it on his behalf:

The Record of Pointing to the Moon states: “… There was a monk named Shenguang who had long lived in the Yi and Luo regions. He had read widely in the various classics and was skilled at discoursing on abstruse principles. He would often sigh, saying: ‘The teachings of Confucius and Laozi concern ritual arts and social norms, while the books of Zhuangzi and the Book of Changes do not exhaust the wondrous

principle. Recently I have heard that the great being Bodhidharma is residing at Shaolin. Such a realized person is not far away; I should go to that realm of profundity.' He thereupon went to attend upon the Patriarch. The Patriarch constantly sat upright facing the wall, and Shenguang heard no instruction or encouragement."

Guang reflected to himself: "In former times, those who sought the Way knocked out their marrow to obtain marrow, pricked themselves for blood to relieve hunger, spread out their hair to cover mud, and leapt from cliffs to feed tigers. The ancients were still thus—who am I?" It happened to be during a heavy snowfall. Guang stood waiting through the night, and by dawn the accumulated snow had risen above his knees. Yet he stood with ever greater reverence.

The Patriarch looked back at him with compassion and asked, "You have stood long in the snow. What do you seek?" Guang wept sorrowfully and said, "I only pray that the Reverend, in compassion, will open the gate of sweet dew and liberate widely all kinds of beings." The Patriarch said, "The unsurpassed wondrous Way of all Buddhas requires diligent striving through vast kalpas, doing what is difficult to do and enduring what cannot be endured. How could one, with scant virtue and little wisdom, a light and arrogant mind, hope to attain the true vehicle? It would only be labor in vain."

Having heard the Patriarch's instruction and encouragement, Guang secretly obtained a sharp knife, cut off his own left arm, and placed it before the Patriarch. Knowing that he was a vessel of the Dharma, the Patriarch said, "When all Buddhas first seek the Way, they forget bodily form for the Dharma. Now that you have cut off your arm before me, your seeking may indeed be possible." The Patriarch therefore changed his name to Huike. Huike then asked, "May I hear the Dharma seal of all Buddhas?" The Patriarch replied, "The Dharma seal of all Buddhas is not obtained from another."

Huike said, "My mind has not yet found peace. I beg the Master to set it at rest for me." The Patriarch said, "Bring me your mind, and I will set it at rest for you." After a long while, Huike said, "Having sought for the mind, I cannot find it." The Patriarch said, "I have set your mind at rest for you." (Bajiao Qing said, "A vajra and a mud figure rub each other's backs." Yuanwu Keqin said, "At just such a time, where is the dharmakāya?")

It turns out that the phrase "A vajra and a mud figure rub each other's backs" was Chan Master Bajiao Huiqing's comment on this Patriarchal koan. Chan Master Bajiao Huiqing was the fourth-generation patriarch of the Guiyang school. His lineage was: Weishan Lingyou Yangshan Huiji Nanta Guangyong Bajiao Huiqing.

At this point, both the origin of the phrase “A vajra and a mud figure rub each other’s backs” and the person who uttered it have been established through textual investigation. Can one enter into the Patriarchs’ intent through such investigation? Clearly not.

The author of this book, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, was a contemporary of the Huayan Lay Practitioner. Although he knew that “beneath his great reputation, the reality fell far short,” he was somewhat reluctant to say much. He merely cited the proverb, “Before a person of great wisdom there are three feet of darkness.” In truth, calling him “a person of great wisdom” was polite, just as we may seek an enlightened teacher in our practice, yet in speech do not slander famous teachers. The “three feet of darkness” in the proverb is the actual assessment. In fact, how could the Huayan Lay Practitioner’s “darkness” have been limited to three feet?

The Elder could bear it no longer and commented: “It was plainly told to you (‘A vajra and a mud figure rub each other’s backs’)—why do you not understand?” Let me interpret it for you (“Let me add another annotation for you”)—“The Eastern Mountain walks upon the water!”

Twenty: Clouds Emerge from the Valley

[Original Koan Text]

Chan Master Cizhao Cong, a Dharma heir of Shoushan, resided at Shimen in Xiangzhou during the Xianping era. One day, the prefect, acting out of personal resentment, had him flogged and humiliated. When the master returned, the monks came out to greet him by the roadside. The head seat hurried forward, made his salutations, and said, “The prefect has wrongfully humiliated the venerable master in this way!” Cizhao pointed to the ground and said, “On level ground, a pile of bones rises.” At his pointing, a heap of earth surged up. When the prefect heard of this, he ordered it leveled, but it rose up again as before. Later, the prefect’s entire family died in Xiangzhou.

Again, a monk asked, “Is there Buddhadharma even amid the cliffs of deep mountains?” Cizhao said, “There is.” The monk continued, “What is the Buddhadharma amid the cliffs of deep mountains?” Cizhao said, “Strange rocks take the form of tigers; fire-scorched pine trees assume the bearing of dragons.”

Layman Wujin loved these words. Yet the Record of Shimen alone does not include these two incidents. Master Miaoxi personally heard Layman Wujin relate both of them.

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

Clouds emerge from the gorge with the bearing of dragons!

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Cizhao Cong was the Chan Master Shimen Yuncong mentioned earlier—that is, Xue Datou: Chan Master Yuncong Cizhao of Guyin Mountain in Xiangzhou. The Record of Shimen records the deeds of Chan Master Cizhao Cong, but two incidents were not collected in it.

One was the karmic retribution in this very life for venting private resentment by humiliating and beating a great patriarch—an early death (the karmic retribution extending into another life is even more terrifying: retribution in the Avīci Hell!). The other was a Chan dialogue. Layman Wujin Zhang Shangying, then renowned throughout Chan circles, was especially fond of this exchange. Chan Master Dahui Zonggao personally heard Zhang Shangying recount these two incidents.

"Strange rocks take the form of tigers; fire-scorched pine trees assume the bearing of dragons." These words are indeed fine and highly evocative. Yet "fire-scorched pine trees" somewhat spoils the scene. The Elder's marginal note reads, "Clouds emerge from the gorge with the bearing of dragons!" This gives it a still more distinctive flavor. Now look again at this exchange:

Question: "Is there Buddhadharma even amid the cliffs of deep mountains?"

Answer: "There is."

Question: "What is the Buddhadharma amid the cliffs of deep mountains?"

Answer: "Strange rocks take the form of tigers; clouds emerge from the gorge with the bearing of dragons."

Compare it with "fire-scorched pine trees," and you can see the Elder's artistic vision, can you not?

Twenty-One: What Sincere Aspiration Invites

[Original Text of the Koan]

Layman Li Shang of Mount Lu offended the earth through construction work, and his entire household became ill with swelling. They sought medical treatment, but it proved ineffective. They then thoroughly cleaned their rooms, had each family member purify their mind through fasting, and respectfully burned incense while reciting the "Blazing Light Mantra" to make amends for whatever they had offended. Before seven days had passed, he dreamed one night of an old man in white riding an ox in his home. Suddenly, the ground gave way, and the old man gradually sank

out of sight. The next day, young and old alike were all well. The response evoked by sincere devotion is as swift as an echo following a sound. Could this be possible without the Buddha's power?

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

Everyone in Li Shang's household fell ill. At first they consulted physicians, but to no effect. They then purified the space and their minds, respectfully burned incense, and vowed to recite the "Blazing Light Mantra" for seven days. Before the seven days were completed, a response occurred, and everyone was completely cured.

There are two points here that require attention:

1. When one is ill, one should see a doctor. Only if the illness truly cannot be treated by a doctor should other methods be used.

2. Reciting a mantra reverently and continuously for several days was called in ancient times "as swift as an echo follows a sound"—a rapid spiritual response, like seeing a shadow as soon as a pole is erected, or hearing a bell ring when it is struck.

This "rapidity" means reciting the mantra continuously for several days, enduring illness and pain, and persisting in the practice. People today recite a mantra once and expect to be cured; chant the Buddha's name once and expect rebirth in the Western Pure Land; sit in meditation for a while and expect awakening. They no longer possess the sincerity of the ancients. Without sincere resolve in the mind, one naturally cannot evoke a response. If you wish to feed someone but they will not open their mouth, or wish to pull them up but they will not extend a hand, then even with the Buddha's power, what can be done for them?

22. Sima Returns First

[The Original Koan]

Master Huayan Yong, the Dharma heir of Chan Master Yuanzhao Ben, attained an insight after taking a fall. He composed this verse: "This fall, this fall—ten thousand taels of gold would still be worth spending. A hat upon my head, a bundle at my waist; clear wind and bright moon hang from the tip of my staff."

Duke Zheng of Fu often consulted him. One day, seeing him ascend the Dharma seat and look about to either side, he suddenly awakened. He sent this verse to Yuanzhao: "At a single sight of Master Yong, I awakened deeply. Through causes and conditions, I have received the mind of my teacher. Though mountains and rivers lie a thousand li apart, my eyes meet numinous light and wondrous sound."

After Duke Zheng was removed from his post as prime minister and was living in Luoyang, he recalled Yong's former instruction and, wishing to repay it, invited him to reside at Zhaoti Monastery. Hearing that Yong had entered the district, he personally went out to welcome him. As he was about to mount his carriage, Sima Wengong happened to arrive and asked, "Where is Your Excellency going?" Duke Zheng replied, "To welcome Chan Master Yong of Zhaoti." Wengong said, "I shall go with you." They rode side by side beyond the city gates and waited at the posthouse pavilion. After a long while, they suddenly saw several dozen loads pass by.

Wengong asked, "Whose luggage is this?" The bearers replied, "It is the luggage of the newly appointed abbot of Zhaoti." Wengong then called for his horse and returned. Duke Zheng said, "You wished to see Master Huayan; why are you going back first?" Wengong replied, "I have already seen him." He then returned ahead of the others.

Miaoxi once heard Li Yizhong, Vice Minister, speak of this.

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

He had indeed seen the man! Do not suppose that awakening puts an end to birth and death; beginningless habitual tendencies still remain!

Master Guishan said: "After awakening, beginningless habitual tendencies are not easily eliminated all at once. One must completely eradicate the stream of consciousness driven by present karma before that can be achieved." This is indeed well founded.

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

Miaoxi was the self-designation of Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, the author of this book. He personally heard this account from Vice Minister Li.

Huayan Yong was Chan Master Touzi Xiuyong, the seventh patriarch of the Yunmen school: Yunmen Wenyan Xianglin Chengyuan Zhimen Guangzuo Xuedou Chongxian Tianyi Yihuai Huilin Zongben (Yuanzhao Ben) Touzi Xiuyong. He awakened to his original nature after taking a fall.

Duke Zheng of Fu awakened under Chan Master Xiuyong. One day, he saw the master looking about to either side and suddenly awakened. This may sound easy enough, but how much unremitting effort it contained! The record in the Compendium of the Five Lamps makes this clear:

The lay practitioner and prime minister Fu Bi, courtesy name Yanguo, after being admonished and encouraged by Duke Qingxian, pursued this path vigorously day and night without respite. Hearing that Master Yong was presiding at Touzi and that

his Dharma seat was foremost throughout the Huai region, he went to seek resolution of his doubts. When Yong ascended the seat for the assembly, Fu saw him look about like an elephant king turning around. Fu gained a slight realization and, taking up the etiquette of a disciple, hurried to the abbot's quarters and instructed the attendant to request a private interview.

Upon seeing him, Yong said, "The prime minister has already come in, but Fu Bi is still outside." Hearing this, Fu broke out in a sweat all over and immediately awakened greatly. He soon sent a verse to Yuanzhao Ben: "At a single sight of Master Yong, I awakened deeply. Through favorable conditions, I received the mind of my teacher. Though people vainly say that mountains and rivers make the southeast remote, my eyes meet numinous light and wondrous sound." Later, he memorialized the court, which bestowed an honorific title on Master Yong. When Yong ascended the Dharma seat to offer thanks, he said: "His temporary misjudgment of me—I too shall make one mistake upon another." Fu composed a verse in praise: "A myriad trees and a thousand flowers are about to flourish; the crouching dragon has not yet emerged from the vast sea. Crimson clouds and colored mists display auspicious signs, yet Southern Mountain remains, as ever, a single expanse of green."

Without such tireless day-and-night effort in pursuing this path, how could he have awakened merely upon seeing the master turn his head? After Duke Zheng of Fu awakened, he wrote a verse and sent it to Chan Master Yuanzhao Ben, his Dharma grandfather, to extol his teacher's virtue. He also submitted a memorial to the court requesting an imperially bestowed title for his teacher. This made Master Yong much more imposing.

Later, Duke Zheng of Fu was dismissed from his post as prime minister and demoted to a local office in Luoyang. Recalling his teacher's former instruction and wishing to repay this kindness, he used his authority to invite his teacher to reside at the local Zhaoti Monastery as head of the monastics in Luoyang—roughly equivalent to the president of a modern Buddhist association. Master Yong naturally did not decline, so he packed his belongings and set out to assume the post.

Hearing that his teacher was about to arrive, Duke Zheng of Fu prepared carriages and horses—today, one would use an automobile—and personally went beyond the city gates to welcome him. The prominent local figure Sima Wengong happened to arrive at that very time and asked where he was going. Fu replied, "To welcome Chan Master Yong of Zhaoti." Wengong had long heard of Master Yong's reputation and wished to go along to receive him.

So they went out of the city together and waited at the pavilion ten li away. After waiting a long time, they saw several dozen loads of luggage being carried past—a

most impressive display! Wengong stepped forward and asked, “Whose luggage is all this?” The carriers informed him, “It belongs to the newly appointed abbot of Zhaoti.” On hearing this, Wengong pulled over his horse and prepared to return.

Duke Zheng of Fu asked, “Did you not wish to see Master Huayan? Why are you returning?” Wengong replied, “I have already seen him.” He did not wait to greet this grandly imposing abbot of Zhaoti, but rode straight back to the city.

Why did he return first? Because he had already seen the man.

The Elder commented: “He had indeed seen the man! Do not suppose that awakening puts an end to birth and death; beginningless habitual tendencies still remain!” Even the seventh patriarch of the Yunmen school had such a habit of extravagance. How can we later students fail to be cautious? The Chan school is forthright: it records what occurred as it occurred, neither glossing over faults nor searching the sūtras and treatises for grand-sounding reasons to conceal them.

“Ordinary mind is the Way; a straightforward mind is the place of practice.” This is indeed no falsehood! In truth, awakening to one’s original nature does not mean that everything is henceforth settled. Beginningless habitual tendencies are not so easily eradicated. Master Guishan said: “After awakening, beginningless habitual tendencies are not easily eliminated all at once. One must completely eradicate the stream of consciousness driven by present karma before that can be achieved.” The Elder praised these words: “This is indeed well founded.”

Twenty-Three: Slandered Without Cause

[Original Text of the Koan]

Old Master Shun was residing at Qixian on Mount Lu. The official Huai of Nankang, out of personal resentment, stripped him of his robes and made him return to lay life. Chan Master Dajue Lian of Jingyin had once entered Master Shun’s room for intimate instruction. When he heard that Shun had been returned to lay status, he sent for him and brought him to Jingyin, yielding his own main quarters to Shun while residing himself in a side room. Emperor Renzong repeatedly summoned Lian to the inner palace to ask about the Way, yet Lian never mentioned Shun’s situation.

One day, Prince Jia, acting on an imperial order, went to Jingyin to offer a meal to the monks. Seeing Dajue attend Master Shun with great reverence, he reported this to Emperor Renzong upon his return. Shun was summoned for an audience in a side hall. On seeing him, the emperor sighed and said, “His bearing in the Way is extraordinary and majestic; he is truly an accomplished gentleman of the mountains and forests.” On Shun’s fan he wrote: “Xiaoshun is hereby restored to the monastic

life.” He further issued a special edict reinstating him at Qixian and bestowed upon him a purple robe and a silver alms bowl.

On the day Master Shun left Qixian, two laborers carried his sedan chair. When they reached the front of Luohan Monastery, the two said to one another, “Since he is no longer the elder of our monastery, we cannot carry him any farther.” They abandoned the chair and went home. When Shun returned, he first sent someone to reassure the two men: “What you did then was right. But set your minds at ease; there is no need for doubt or fear.”

When Master Shun reentered the monastery and ascended the Dharma seat, he composed this verse: “Slandered without cause, I wrongly suffered hardship; for more than half a year, I was a layman. Today I return once more to Three Gorges Monastery—how much joy, how much anger.”

[The Elder’s Marginal Notes]

To know gratitude and repay kindness—surely this is how it should be!

Old Master Shun was fond of scolding people. Was there perhaps some cause for his being slandered without reason?

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

Old Master Shun was Chan Master Xiaoshun of Yunju, the fifth-generation patriarch of the Yunmen school: [Yunmen Wenyan　Deshan Yuanmi　Wenshu Yingzhen　Dongshan Xiaocong　Yunju Xiaoshun]. He liked to scold people. In “V. Extraordinary in Bearing and Ability,” it is mentioned that he “often ridiculed Chan Master Huai of Tianyi for teaching tangled-vine Chan.”

The prefect of Nankang, venting personal resentment, not only refused to let him remain as abbot, but also ordered him to return to lay life by stripping him of his robes. Where did this personal resentment come from? Perhaps it was provoked by his scolding people. The Elder commented: “Old Master Shun was fond of scolding people. Was there perhaps some cause for his being slandered without reason?”

Chan Master Dajue Lian of Jingyin was Chan Master Huailian of Ayuwang, likewise a fifth-generation patriarch of the Yunmen school: [Yunmen Wenyan　Shuangquan Shikuan　Wuzu Shijie　Letan Huaicheng　Ayuwang Huailian]. He had once been an intimate disciple of Old Master Shun. Although he later inherited the Dharma transmission of Chan Master Letan, he never forgot Old Master Shun’s great kindness.

When he heard that Old Master Shun had been slandered without cause and ordered to return to lay life, he sent for him and invited him to come. He gave Old

Master Shun the main abbot's quarters and lived in a side room himself. Emperor Renzong of the Song repeatedly summoned Chan Master Lian to ask about the Chan school's understanding, but Lian did not take the opportunity to report Old Master Shun's unjust treatment.

This may not seem like the conduct of the same person. On the one hand, he was unafraid of being implicated and brought Shun to support him; on the other, though he could meet the emperor, he did not plead Shun's case. Yet if he had memorialized the emperor over this matter, it would have become an official lawsuit. The prefect of Nankang would not have been isolated: he would have had backing not only in official circles but perhaps also in the Chan community.

If the matter had been made too big, it would not necessarily have benefited Old Master Shun. For example, if some prince had spoken to the emperor, or if some senior Chan master had spoken within the Chan community, this could have harmed Shun, who was then a layman. When the melon ripens, its stem naturally falls; when the water arrives, the channel naturally forms. There was no need to contend in litigation. So long as one has the Way, it will naturally spread widely.

When the time and conditions ripen, dragons and devas will naturally bring one forth. By acting in this way, Chan Master Lian neither brought harm upon Old Master Shun, who was still in a vulnerable position, nor failed to nurture Shun's Way. This is truly understanding how to repay kindness. Therefore, the Elder praised him: "To know gratitude and repay kindness—surely this is how it should be!" Look: more than half a year later, the time and conditions finally ripened:

One day, Prince Jia, acting under an imperial decree, went to Chan Master Lian's monastery to offer a meal to the monks. Seeing Chan Master Lian attending Old Master Shun at his side with great reverence, he reported the matter to the emperor. Emperor Renzong of the Song then summoned Old Master Shun to a side hall. Overwhelmed by Shun's manner of speaking and dignified bearing, he praised him: "His bearing in the Way is extraordinary and majestic; he is truly an accomplished gentleman of the mountains and forests."

The emperor wrote on Old Master Shun's fan: "Xiaoshun is hereby restored to the monastic life." He also specially issued an imperial edict, bestowed a purple robe and a silver alms bowl, and invited Old Master Shun to return and preside over his former monastery. Once the emperor had redressed the injustice, the prefect of Nankang could only obey. What more would he dare say?

When Old Master Shun left the monastery half a year earlier, he was carried out by two sedan-chair bearers. Not far from the monastery, the two bearers said to him, "Since you are no longer the elder of our monastery, we cannot carry you any farther." They immediately set down the chair and refused to continue carrying him.

Now Old Master Shun had received the emperor's edict and returned. He first sent someone to reassure those two sedan-chair bearers: "What you did then was not wrong. Simply set your minds at ease and carry the chair; there is no need for doubt or fear." Ah—did he reassure only the chair bearers? Why is there no mention of his reassuring anyone else? Have you not heard Chan Master Zhaozhou say: "When a first-rate person comes, I receive them on the Chan couch; when a middling person comes, I receive them after getting down from the Chan couch; when a lowest-rate person comes, I receive them outside the monastery gate." If he were courteous to someone, what rank would that person be? Ha ha!

When Old Master Shun reentered the monastery, he ascended the Dharma seat and composed a verse: "Slandered without cause, I wrongly suffered hardship; for more than half a year, I was a layman. Today I return once more to Three Gorges Monastery—how much joy, how much anger." Will anyone come forward to comment on this "joy" and "anger"?

Twenty-Four: The Rhinoceros Fan

[The Original Koan]

One day, Old Master Shun cited this case: "Master Yanguan called to his attendant, 'Bring me the rhinoceros-horn fan.' The attendant said, 'The fan is broken.' Yanguan said, 'Since the fan is broken, bring me back the rhinoceros.' The attendant had no reply." Shun said, "During the hottest days of summer, a fan is precisely what is needed. The attendant simply could not handle the matter. Even so, Yanguan was far too wordy! Why not let it all go? When the attendant heard Yanguan say, 'Since the fan is broken, bring me back the rhinoceros,' he should have replied, 'I have already thrown it onto the rubbish heap.'"

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

It is right before your eyes—how could you cast it away!? Ha ha!

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

One day, Old Master Shun took up the koan of "the rhinoceros-horn fan."

Old Master Shun said: "In the scorching heat of midsummer, a fan is just what one needs. If the fan is broken, quickly get a new one."

This attendant truly did not know how to handle matters. No wonder Chan Master Yanguan asked him to return the rhinoceros! Yet even so, Chan Master Yanguan was much too fussy. Why did he not display the broad bearing proper to a Chan master and simply discard the broken fan? Why ask for any rhinoceros? At that moment, the

attendant was stuck fast and simply stared blankly without a reply; he truly could not handle the matter. Why did he not answer, “I have already thrown it onto the rubbish heap”?"

The rhinoceros symbolizes the essence—the true suchness of Buddha-nature; the fan symbolizes the wondrous functioning of the essence—the myriad phenomena. True suchness is unmoving, while all dharmas arise and cease.

“Since the fan is broken, bring me back the rhinoceros.”—Can you recognize this true, unmoving essence amid the illusory arising and ceasing of the myriad dharmas?

“I have already thrown it onto the rubbish heap.”—How could one be so muddled and fail to cut it off completely! I tell you: the moment you seize upon it, you are blind! I have discarded even this.”

Old Master Shun answered in this way in order to sweep away the traces of awakening. In truth, it is always right before one’s eyes. What can be discarded are only appearances and concepts; the essence has always been thus. How could it possibly be discarded? Therefore, the Elder’s marginal note says, “It is right before your eyes—how could you cast it away!? Ha ha!”

Twenty-Five: There Is Still This

[Original Text of the Koan]

Cuiyan Kezhen once scolded Old Man Shun for preaching a Chan of nothing to do. [The Elder’s marginal note: What goes around comes around!]

Chan Master Shishuang Fayong had someone convey this message to Zhen: “When Shun awakened at Dongshan through the circumstance of the ancient mirror, how could he have been preaching a Chan of nothing to do? By scolding him, you have lost one of your own eyes.” [The Elder’s marginal note: Take care not to understand this as actual scolding!]

When Shun heard this, he composed a verse: “Yunju does not understand Chan: he washes his feet, gets into bed, and sleeps. The winter melon is straight and clumsy; the bottle gourd is curved and bent.”

Chan Master Yong also composed a verse: “Shishuang does not understand Chan: he washes his feet, gets into bed, and sleeps. The pillow falls to the ground and breaks a brick of the monastery.” [The Elder’s marginal note: This is still here!]

One day, Shun ascended the hall and said: “After dusk, take off your socks and go to sleep. At dawn, rise and wrap your leg bindings. Last night the wind blew down the fence; summon all the attendants to split bamboo strips and tie it back up.” Then he descended from the seat. [The Elder’s marginal note: How pitiful!]

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

With his forceful Chan style, Chan Master Linji Yixuan raised the radiant banner of the Linji school. Its transmission has continued without interruption, liberating countless people. The lineage of Dharma transmission from above is: Sixth Patriarch Huineng the Great Mirror Nanyue Huairang Mazu Daoyi Baizhang Huaihai Huangbo Xiyun Linji Yixuan. When the Linji school was transmitted to Chan Master Shishuang Chuyuan, it divided below into the Huanglong and Yangqi branches. Shishuang had many outstanding disciples; apart from Huanglong Huinan and Yangqi Fanghui, Chan Master Cuiyan Kezhen was among the most exceptional.

According to the Records of the Lamp: “Chan Master Cuiyan Kezhen of Hongzhou was a native of Fuzhou. Proud of having visited teachers everywhere, he was known in the Chan monasteries as ‘Zhen Who Points to His Chest.’ He once studied under Ciming and, because of this, spent the summer retreat at Jinluan together with the attendant Shan. Shan was Ciming’s foremost disciple; Daowu Zhen and Yangqi Hui both held him in great esteem. The master prided himself on having personally met Ciming and felt that no one under heaven was to his liking. When Shan spoke with him, he knew that Zhen had not penetrated fully and laughed at him.”

One day, while walking in the mountains, they began an intense debate. Shan picked up a piece of tile rubble and placed it on a flat rock, saying: “If you can offer a turning word here, I will acknowledge that you have personally met Ciming.” The master looked to the right and left, preparing to respond. Shan rebuked him: “You pause to think and stop your activity; your discriminating consciousness has not penetrated through. When have you ever even dreamed of it?” Ashamed and alarmed, the master immediately returned to Shishuang.

When Ciming saw him arrive, he rebuked him: “A genuine traveling practitioner must know the proper time. What urgent business brought you here before the summer retreat was over?” The master wept and said: “Brother Shan has poisoned my mind, leaving me obstructed and blocked. Therefore I have come to see you, Master.” Ciming immediately asked: “What is the fundamental meaning of the Buddhadharma?” The master replied: “Cloudless, on the ridge it arises; moonlit, it sinks into the heart of the waves.”

Ciming glared and shouted: “Your head is white and your teeth are exposed, yet you still hold such a view. How will you escape birth and death?” Startled, the master sought instruction. Ciming said: “Ask me.” The master repeated his earlier question.

Ciming thundered: “Cloudless, on the ridge it arises; moonlit, it sinks into the heart of the waves.” At these words, the master had a great awakening. His spirit became open and untrammeled, and his Chan responsiveness and eloquence were swift; the Chan monasteries held him in awe.

Chan Master Cuiyan Zhen had long studied Chan under Chan Master Shishuang (Ciming); it was not that he had no realization. He was very self-assured—self-assurance means thinking oneself remarkable. Yet, when he “began an intense debate,” he was thoroughly humbled by the attendant Shan. This awakened him from the delusion of his self-assurance. Ashamed that he had not penetrated fully, he returned to seek instruction from Ciming.

Ciming asked him: “What is the fundamental meaning of the Buddhadharma?” He replied: “Cloudless, on the ridge it arises; moonlit, it sinks into the heart of the waves.”

This answer was actually not wrong. It swept away the extreme views of existence and nonexistence—for to speak of existence or nonexistence is like the clouds on the ridge or the moon in the water: utterly unobtainable. Yet if one merely understands this intellectually, without grounding it in the mind-ground, then when circumstances arise one falls into views of existence and nonexistence. That is like mercury in medicinal liquid: it flies away as soon as it encounters fire. When he later asked Ciming, “What is the fundamental meaning of the Buddhadharma?” Ciming loudly declared: “Cloudless, on the ridge it arises; moonlit, it sinks into the heart of the waves.” He was able to have a great awakening at those very words!

What did he awaken to?

Oh? Are you asking me? Very well—listen carefully: “Cloudless, on the ridge it arises; moonlit, it sinks into the heart of the waves.”

Cuiyan Zhen scolded Old Man Shun, accusing him of teaching a Chan of nothing to do and falling into emptiness. Ha ha! This Old Man Shun liked scolding people, and now he has been scolded himself. No wonder the Elder commented: “What goes around comes around!”

Chan Master Shishuang Fayong considered Cuiyan Zhen’s scolding unjustified. He cited the circumstance in which Old Man Shun awakened to the ancient mirror at Dongshan, to show that Shun could not possibly have fallen into emptiness. What was this circumstance of “Shun’s awakening to the ancient mirror at Dongshan”? Let us look at the account in the Records of the Lamp:

“Chan Master Yunju Xiaoshun of Ruizhou was a native of Ruizhou. In his youth he was rough and fierce [no wonder he loved scolding people]. Suddenly awakening to

the illusory nature of worldly things, he took refuge with a teacher and left home, thereafter cultivating refined conduct. He visited Dongshan [Chan Master Dongshan Xiaocong of the Yunmen school]. One day, while traveling to Wuchang to beg for alms, he first called at the home of Layman Liu. The layman was highly virtuous and respected by the people of his time; whatever he approved or rejected, everyone followed."

"The master was young at the time and, not knowing that the layman was deeply practiced, thought little of him. The layman said: 'This old man has a question. If we are in accord, I shall open my storehouse; if not, please return to the mountain.' He then asked: 'What is the ancient mirror like before it has been polished?' The master said: 'Black as lacquer.' The layman asked: 'What is it like after it has been polished?' The master said: 'It illuminates heaven and earth.' The layman made a deep bow and said: 'Please, Venerable Sir, return to the mountain.'"

He brushed his sleeves and went into the house. The master was deeply ashamed and returned at once to Dongshan. Dongshan asked why, and the master related the entire matter. Dongshan said: "Ask me, and I will tell you." The master repeated his earlier question ["What is the ancient mirror like before it has been polished?"]. Dongshan said: "Hanyang is not far from here." The master continued with the later question ["What is it like after it has been polished?"]. Dongshan said: "Parrot Islet lies before Yellow Crane Tower." At these words, the master had a great awakening, and none could touch his Chan responsiveness.

Looking at his realization: the original ground is present and complete here and now. Old Man Shun indeed could not possibly have fallen into emptiness. Since he did not fall into emptiness, why did Cuiyan scold him? Chan Master Cuiyan was a clear-eyed person, so why did he scold him? You should know that when Chan patriarchs teach the Dharma, they always present something suited to the learner's capacity. Their methods often include beating the grass to startle the snake or striking the mountain to shake the tiger. Do you think he was truly scolding Old Man Shun? Old Man Shun was not even before him; why would he scold him? Therefore, the Elder commented: "Take care not to understand this as actual scolding!"

Let us leave the verses, entangling words, and marginal notes that follow for everyone to discuss. How about that?

[Related Discussion]

What is the ancient mirror like before it has been polished? Answer: My wife's foot-binding cloth. What is it like after polishing? Answer: Eh? Who is knocking at my door? Big Rat 22:45:09 5/14/02 (no content)

Before the ancient mirror is polished, it is an ancient mirror; after polishing, it is still an ancient mirror. One simply knows that there is this mirror. liwei1111101 09:39:06 5/15/02 (no content)

Before the ancient mirror is polished, one already knows the mirror, but habitual tendencies have obscured its original face. One need only fear still clinging to this. Green Dragon 10:40:33 5/15/02 (no content)

If someone asked you, “What were you like before awakening?”, how would you answer? lvm 23:11:59 5/14/02 (no content)

If I had a stick in my hand, I would strike him. Big Rat 23:22:59 5/14/02 (no content)

Ha ha! A blind blow is fit only for oneself to receive. lvm 23:27:36 5/14/02 (no content)

Do not take it lightly! Big Rat 23:30:20 5/14/02 (no content)

A donkey’s head does not match a horse’s mouth. lvm 00:42:08 5/15/02 (no content)

Yet both eat grass. Big Rat 21:04:06 5/15/02 (no content)

Big Rat sleeps a big sleep. Big Rat 23:19:41 5/14/02 (no content)

With a foot-binding cloth for a pillow? lvm 23:25:44 5/14/02 (no content)

A pillow. Big Rat 23:26:39 5/14/02 (no content)

What nonsense are you talking? Give me back my huatou! lvm 23:29:23 5/14/02 (no content)

Which huatou do you want? Big Rat 23:31:36 5/14/02 (no content)

“What is the ancient mirror like before it has been polished?” and “What were you like before awakening?”—how could they mean two different things? lvm 23:37:03 5/14/02 (62)

Ah, are you still entangled in the foot-binding cloth? Big Rat 23:38:04 5/14/02 (no content)

What nonsense are you talking? Are you drunk? lvm 23:43:52 5/14/02 (no content)

Drinking all day, yet never getting drunk. Big Rat 23:48:11 5/14/02 (22)

Everyone, be careful! The rat has gone mad. lvm 23:57:12 5/14/02 (no content)

And you still go about troubling others! Big Rat 23:58:34 5/14/02 (no content)

Please instruct us, Teacher! Dingling 22:10:09 5/14/02 (79)

Please give two more answers: lvm 23:19:31 5/14/02 (144)

Please offer further instruction! Dingling 12:29:39 5/15/02 (183)

Please come in: lvm 16:47:47 5/15/02 (229)

Please offer further instruction! Dingling 19:27:38 5/15/02 (94)

The previous one was better. lvm 19:47:25 5/15/02 (138)

Please offer further instruction! Dingling 20:12:18 5/15/02 (64)

I can't see where it is dragging. lvm 20:26:29 5/15/02 (no content)

Many thanks for your instruction, Teacher! Dingling 20:28:52 5/15/02 (no content)

A brief interjection. Big Mouse 00:08:09 5/15/02 (197)

Ha ha! You've come running over here again. lvm 00:17:47 5/15/02 (56)

I'll leave you wondering. Big Mouse 00:20:12 5/15/02 (no content)

Could it be that the mouse has turned into a cat? lvm 00:27:43 5/15/02 (no content)

Should I cover your mouth, or show you the soles of my feet? Big Mouse 00:27:24 5/15/02 (no content)

Everyone! Look at the mouse. lvm 00:35:22 5/15/02 (no content)

Anyone else who wants to awaken to the Way? Please come over... Big Mouse 00:39:19 5/15/02 (24)

Should I cover your mouth, or show you the soles of my feet? Ruling 09:54:35 5/15/02 (no content)

Ha ha, as payment, how about I treat you to a simple meal? Big Mouse 20:55:07 5/15/02 (no content)

My hands are not free! Ruling 09:39:21 5/16/02 (no content)

My hand is still covering your mouth, isn't it? Ruling 09:54:16 5/16/02 (no content)

How are you and I supposed to eat this meal? Ruling 09:36:26 5/16/02 (no content)

It was too late yesterday; let's speak properly today: lvm 08:51:09 5/15/02 (52)

I've just arrived; please speak. Big Mouse 20:02:52 5/15/02 (no content)

These three answers: lvm 22:12:48 5/15/02 (160)

Not a single one is right! Big Mouse 07:46:01 5/16/02 (no content)

3. What will you do from now on? lvm 21:57:15 5/15/02 (no content)

On the surface, this question seems gentle and mild, but in fact it conceals murderous intent. Little Junior Brother 23:00:49 5/15/02 (179)

When hungry, eat; when tired, sleep. Big Mouse 21:58:50 5/15/02 (no content)

2. Have you gone mad? lvm 21:42:02 5/15/02 (no content)

Still not to your taste? Fine, this one, then... Big Mouse 21:55:51 5/15/02 (170)

So what if I have gone mad? Big Mouse 21:43:27 5/15/02 (no content)

This answer is precisely a response that follows the wording; it has been led around by the nose by “gone mad,” but... Little Junior Brother 23:10:06 5/15/02 (66)

All right! One at a time: 1. Have you awakened? lvm 20:28:24 5/15/02 (no content)

It seems this does not suit Teacher's taste. Fine, then this one... Big Mouse 21:22:46 5/15/02 (172)

This answer would naturally be fine in ordinary circumstances, but here it dulls the blade and injures the hand. Lion 22:10:35 5/15/02 (no content)

Hee-hee, for me, this very moment is an ordinary time. Little Junior Brother 22:53:35 5/15/02 (no content)

I replied to your letter; please check it. As for this question... Big Mouse 20:35:12 5/15/02 (32)

Twenty-Six: Other Matters

[Original Text of the Koan]

Among the assembly of the Fifth Patriarch was a monk named Fachuo. When he entered the master's room for an interview, the Patriarch asked, “Who is the one who does not keep company with the myriad dharmas?” The monk replied, “Fachuo is not thus.” The Patriarch pointed with his hand and said, “Stop! Stop! If Fachuo is not thus, then what is it?” At these words, Fachuo had an awakening. [The Elder’s marginal note: What a fine blow!]

Later, he went to the room of Master Xuanmi Du of Donglin and fully grasped the plain and direct purport. One day, Fachuo took a flower, circled the Chan couch once, and, with his hands behind his back, inserted it into the incense burner. He said, “Reverend, tell me: what does this mean?” Xuanmi Du repeatedly offered responses, but Fachuo did not approve of any of them. After two months, he finally asked Fachuo, “You try telling me.” [The Elder’s marginal note: Even here, he could not help concealing things from himself!] Fachuo said, “I merely put the flower in the incense burner. It is you who suspected there was something else. What other matter is there?” [The Elder’s marginal note: He ended up utterly nonplussed!]

[Sawing Open a Steelyard Weight]

What a fellow Chan Master Fachuo was! From his statement, “Fachuo is not thus,” one can see that the degree of his self-assurance was no less than that of Cuiyan Zhen in the preceding koan. Chan Master Fayen of the Fifth Patriarch was indeed a great master. Seizing on this remark, he caught hold of the fox’s tail. Having found this crucial point, he struck fiercely: “Stop! Stop! When you say, ‘Fachuo is not thus,’ what are you doing? Is this not keeping company with the myriad dharmas?!”

Self-assurance arises from attachment to self and views of self; it is caused by arrogance. Fachuo had fallen into this without knowing it. Master Fayen immediately seized him and dealt him a blow straight on—were you not keeping company with “views of self and arrogance” at this very moment? This blow awakened Fachuo, and his “view of self” immediately fell away. Master Fayen was skillful indeed! The Elder praised him, saying: “What a fine blow!”

Later, Senior Monk Fachuo went to Chan Master Du of Donglin, where he thoroughly embodied the plain and direct tenet of the Chan school in his mind-ground.

One day, Fachuo took a flower, walked once around Master Du’s seat, and, with his hands behind his back, inserted the flower into the incense burner. He asked the Chan master of Donglin, “Please tell me, what does this mean?” (If it is called plain and direct, why make such a strange gesture? A blow to Fachuo’s head would have settled everything!) Yet this Chan master of Donglin repeatedly offered responses over the course of two months, and Fachuo said that none was correct.

After two months, the Chan master of Donglin could contain himself no longer and asked Fachuo to tell him the answer. Ha ha! This Master Du thought Fachuo had been concealing something from him for two months, always feeling that there must be some mystery in it. Yet, just as the Elder said: “Even here, he could not help concealing things from himself!” He was deceiving himself.

Fachuo told him, “I merely put the flower in the incense burner. You yourself suspected that there was something else; in fact, there was nothing else!” So that

was it! It was just like a thief entering an empty house. One can imagine how Master Du felt at that moment. Just as the Elder noted: “He ended up utterly nonplussed!”

27. Twists and Turns

[Original Koan Text]

When Chan Master Foyan was with Wuzu, Yuanwu cited Linji: “If you realize it beneath the first phrase, you can serve as a teacher to Buddhas and patriarchs; if you realize it beneath the second phrase, you can serve as a teacher to humans and devas; if you realize it beneath the third phrase, you cannot even save yourself.” One day, Foyan suddenly said to Yuanwu, “I too will present the three phrases to you.” Bending his fingers, he said, “This is the second phrase; the third phrase has already been spoken.” Then he walked away.

Yuanwu reported this to Wuzu, who said, “Not bad.” Foyan then took leave of Wuzu and went to study with Chan Master Zhenjing of Guizong. After he had gone, Wuzu said to Yuanwu, “Guizong’s waves are broad and vast; he knows how to wield a great banner. Qingyuan may go far enough to reach him, but they may not necessarily accord.” Before many days had passed, a letter arrived for Yuanwu: “Upon arriving north at Guizong, I happened to slip through the net.”

He heard that Qing, the head-seat monk at Yunju, had composed an encomium for Master Huitang’s portrait: “Before meeting him, one is rich and noble; after meeting him, one is poor and destitute.” He was quite doubtful about this. Yet when they met, they indeed accorded. More than a year later, he returned to the ancestral mountain. The assembly invited him to take up the whisk and teach, but he spoke instead of Chan centered on mind and nature. Wuzu said, “Yuan may speak of Chan in this way; do not concern yourselves with him.”

Master Yuanwu had once studied with Chan Master Fang of Beiwuya in Qizhou, and Master Fojian had once studied with Chan Master Du of Xuanmi at Donglin. Both had attained the Chan principle of “plain reality.” When they came together to Wuzu’s room, not a single phrase of what they had gained throughout their lives could be put to use. For a long time neither attained awakening or accord, and both said that Wuzu was forcibly shifting away what they had previously gained and replacing it with something else. They spoke disrespectfully and left in anger.

Wuzu said, “Go travel and study in Zhejiang. When a severe fever strikes you, then you will remember me.” When Yuanwu reached Jinshan, he suddenly contracted typhoid fever. In extreme distress, he was moved into the ward for the gravely ill. He then tested the Chan he had studied throughout his life, but not a single phrase

proved effective. Recalling Wuzu's words, he vowed, "As soon as my illness eases a little, I shall return directly to Wuzu."

Fojian, at Dinghui, also contracted typhoid and was in critical condition. When Yuanwu recovered consciousness, he passed through Dinghui and urged him to return with him to western Huai. Fojian remained obstinate and told him to go on ahead. Yuanwu hastened back to the ancestral mountain. Master Yan said gladly, "You have come back?" That very day Yuanwu entered the meditation hall and became an attendant. [Elder's marginal note: A true hero turns back and admits his mistake!]

After half a month, Commissioner Chen, having relinquished his seal of office and returned to Shu, passed through the mountain and asked about the Way. In the course of their conversation, Wuzu said, "Commissioner, did you read the poem 'Little Yan'? It contains two lines quite close to this matter: 'Calling repeatedly for Xiaoyu is originally nothing; it is only to make Tanlang recognize the voice.'" The commissioner answered, "Yes, yes." Wuzu said, "Examine it carefully."

Yuanwu happened to return from outside and, while standing in attendance, asked, "I heard that Your Reverence cited the poem 'Little Yan.' Did the commissioner understand it?" Wuzu replied, "He merely recognized the voice." Yuanwu said, "'It is only to make Tanlang recognize the voice.' Since he recognized the voice, why was that not it?" Wuzu said, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West? The cypress tree in the courtyard."

Yuanwu suddenly had an awakening. He hurried outside and saw a chicken fly up onto the railing, flap its wings, and crow. He said to himself, "Is this not precisely the voice?" He then tucked incense into his sleeve, entered the master's room, and reported his realization. Wuzu said, "The great matter of Buddhas and patriarchs is not something that those of small capacity and inferior faculties can attain. I rejoice for you." Wuzu then told all the senior monks on the mountain, "My attendant has realized Chan." [Elder's marginal note: Do not let him deceive you. Everything is already present: sound is not different from form; form is precisely sound!]

When Master Fojian returned to the ancestral mountain from Zhejiang, he hesitated and would not hang up his traveling bag to join the resident community. Yuanwu said, "We have been apart for only a little over a month. Compared with before, how am I now that we meet again?" Fojian said, "It is just these things about you that puzzle me." He then entered the meditation hall. One day, while Fojian and Yuanwu were attending Wuzu and conversing during an outing in the mountains, Wuzu cited this exchange: "A monk of Dongsi asked Yangshan, 'Where are you from?' Yangshan replied, 'Guangnan.'"

Dongsi said, ‘I have heard that Guangnan has a bright pearl that calms the sea. Have you ever obtained it?’ Yangshan replied, ‘I have obtained it.’ Dongsi asked, ‘What color is the pearl?’ Yangshan said, ‘On a white-moon night it appears; on a black-moon night it is hidden.’ [Elder’s marginal note: When was it ever hidden on a black-moon night?] Dongsi said, ‘Why not present it to this old monk?’”

Yangshan clasped his hands and stepped forward, saying, ‘Yesterday, when Huiji arrived at Weishan, he was asked for this pearl and was left with no words to answer and no principle to set forth.’” Turning to Fojian, Wuzu said, “He first said, ‘I have obtained it.’

Yet when asked for this pearl, he then said, ‘I have no words to answer and no principle to set forth.’ What does this mean?” Fojian had no reply. [Elder’s marginal note: What a pity—you missed it!] One day he suddenly said to Yuanwu, “I have something to say about the circumstances of Yangshan’s meeting with Dongsi: Dongsi asked at that time for only one pearl, but Yangshan immediately poured out an entire basketful!” [Elder’s marginal note: Eight beats too late already!] Yuanwu deeply approved of this.

[Elder’s Marginal Notes]

Fojian’s place of awakening ultimately did not equal that of Foguo. These small details already reveal the signs.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Foguo Yuanwu Keqin, Fojian Taiping Huiqin, and Foyan Longmen Qingyuan were known collectively as the “Three Buddhas.” Among the many Dharma heirs of Chan Master Wuzu Fayan, they were the three most outstanding. This koan records how all three studied the Dharma with Chan Master Wuzu Fayan. The author of Armory of the Chan School, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, inherited Foguo’s Dharma robe; this is an insider recounting the affairs of his own household.

Foguo once presented the “Three Phrases of Linji” to Foyan. One day Foyan suddenly said to Foguo, “I too will present the three phrases to you.” Bending his fingers, he said, “This is the second phrase. The third phrase has already been spoken.” Having said this, he walked away.

Speaking was the third phrase, and bending the fingers was the second. Then what was the first? “He walked away”—that was it: he brushed off his sleeves, returned to the abbot’s quarters, and sat securely at home. Not bad at all! Foguo told his teacher about this, and the teacher said lightly, “Not bad.” Clearly, he did not approve of Foyan.

When Foyan learned this, he took leave of his teacher and went to study Chan with Master Guizong. After Foyan departed, Master Fayan said to Foguo, “Guizong’s Chan style is broad and surging; he flourishes a great banner. Qingyuan may not necessarily accord with him.” No one knows a disciple better than the teacher: Foyan indeed did not accord with him, and so he went to study with Qing, the head-seat monk at Yunju.

After roaming about in this way for a year, he returned. When everyone saw that he had come back, they invited him to teach the Dharma, but he spoke instead of Chan centered on mind and nature. Although Master Fayan did not approve, he did not interfere. Why did he not interfere? The reason is simple: Foyan established mind and nature, and Fayan did not approve. If he had interfered, what further position would he himself have established? This is Foyan’s story. Now let us speak of Foguo and Fojian.

Foguo had studied Chan with Chan Master Fang of Beiwuya in Qizhou, and Fojian had studied Chan with Chan Master Du of Xuanmi at Donglin. Both had already attained the Chan school’s principle of “plain reality.” Everyone has encountered this “principle of plain reality” in the preceding koan.

When the two came together to study Chan with Master Wuzu Fayan, that “principle of plain reality” did not fit at all. Both said that their teacher was forcibly removing what they had previously attained and forcibly replacing it with the Chan style taught here. They spoke disrespectfully and departed resentfully.

Their teacher said, “Go forth on pilgrimage and study Chan. When you contract a hot-and-cold illness in Zhejiang, you will remember me.” The two traveled to Zhenjiang: Foguo was at Jinshan Monastery and Fojian at Dinghui Monastery. Both contracted typhoid fever and became seriously ill. Not a single phrase of what they had ordinarily considered an attainment was of any use.

Foguo vowed, “As soon as my illness improves even slightly, I shall immediately return to my teacher.” His illness did indeed improve, and Foguo at once went to Dinghui Monastery to urge Fojian to return with him. But Fojian refused; he was still resisting, and told Foguo to go back first. Foguo hurried back to pay respects to his teacher. The teacher said happily, “You have finally returned.” Thereupon Foguo became his attendant. To recognize one’s error and correct it without delay is the greatest good! The elder praises Foguo: a true hero turns back and admits his mistake!

Half a month later, Commissioner Chen retired from office and returned home. Passing through this place, he asked about the essential principle of Chan. Master Wuzu Fayan said, “Have you read the poem ‘Little Yan’? It contains two lines quite close to this matter: ‘Calling repeatedly for Xiaoyu is originally nothing; it is only to

make Tanlang recognize the voice.'" The commissioner responded repeatedly in assent, nodding that he understood.

The Chan master said, "Examine it carefully—you must not be muddle-headed about it." When Foguo learned of this, he asked his teacher, "You cited the two lines from 'Little Yan.' Did he realize it?" His teacher replied, "He merely recognized the voice—he did not realize it."

Foguo said, "Did you not say, 'It is only to make Tanlang recognize the voice'? Since he recognized the voice, why was that not it?" The teacher abruptly shifted the point: "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West? The cypress tree in the courtyard!" Foguo understood immediately. Leaving the room, he saw a chicken fly and heard it crow. He said to himself, "Is this not precisely the voice?" At once, with great reverence, he went to report his realization to his teacher.

The teacher said, "The great matter of Buddhas and patriarchs is not something that those of small capacity and inferior faculties can attain. I rejoice with you." He also praised Foguo before others, saying that he had realized Chan. Ah—but wait a moment.

If hearing a chicken crow was it, then why was Commissioner Chen's recognizing the voice not it? Be patient. Do not become utterly bewildered; listen to what the elder says: "Do not let him deceive you. Everything is already present: sound is not different from form; form is precisely sound!" "Do not let him deceive you" means: do not rigidly cling to "recognizing the voice." Everything is already present—but what is present? "Sound is not different from form; form is precisely sound!" Sound and form are one thusness, thoroughly forming an unbroken whole. Both are "recognizing the voice," yet the difference between them is as vast as heaven and abyss!

Now let us return to Fojian. A month later, he too came back, but hesitated and would not hang up his traveling bag to join the resident community. (Ha! Although he had returned, he was still resisting.)

Foguo demonstrated the Dharma in person: "We have not seen each other for only a little more than a month. Tell me—compared with before, how am I now?" Fojian was also puzzled: "Your speech, bearing, and conduct are all entirely different from before. What has happened?" Thereupon, he immediately hung up his traveling bag and joined the resident community.

One day, Foguo and Fojian accompanied their master on an outing in the mountains. The master brought up the Chan koan of the "Pearl That Calms the Sea" and asked Fojian, "Since Yangshan had said, 'I have received it,' why, when asked for

the pearl, did he then say, 'I have no words to answer with and no reason to offer'? Why was that?" Fojian could not answer.

In fact, at that very moment he himself was in the state of having "no words to answer with and no reason to offer." Had he made a decisive response then, the master's question would not have been in vain. But he fell into conceptual thought and let the moment slip by.

Therefore, the old master said of him, "What a pity—you missed it!" A few days later, he finally understood. Delighted, he said to Foguo, "I have an answer now: Dongsi asked only for one pearl, but Yangshan immediately poured out a whole basketful!" Foguo acknowledged that his answer was good. Good it was, but it came too late. Would it not have been better had he answered at the very moment the master spoke? No wonder the old master said, "Eight quarters too late!"

The old master commented, "Fojian's point of awakening ultimately did not equal Foguo's." Why did he say this? Because "these small incidents already reveal the signs."

What were those incidents? Simply put: first, one hurried back while the other delayed his return; after returning, one made a heartfelt confession and repentance, while the other hesitated about taking up lodging; then, when they suddenly bumped into their own nostrils, one was wholly natural, with sound and form alike, while the other missed it right before his eyes and was eight quarters too late. All these are paths taken by the mind! Even later, down to the present day, Foguo's lineage has spread throughout the world. The cause and effect of the supramundane are plainly before our eyes.

The old master also had another comment that has not yet been mentioned. Did Yangshan not say, "When the white moon appears, the black moon disappears"? The old master commented: "When has the black moon ever disappeared?!" Do not suppose that, in saying this, the old master was rejecting Yangshan. You may as well look at that "white moon," and look at that "appears." Do you understand now? Ha ha! What? You still do not understand?? Investigate!!!

[The following content is from the forum]

"When the white moon appears, a thousand boats cross; when the black moon disappears, they return to one harbor."? Jianhui 22:52:22 5/18/02 (no content)

Such immense cause and effect. Zhong Bushuo 09:48:04 5/17/02 (no content)

What is a "kaolao"? manman 22:37:30 5/16/02 (no content)

A container woven from willow branches, shaped like a grain measure. Changru 23:54:51 5/16/02 (no content)

Haha, it is simply a basket. Changru 23:56:41 5/16/02 (no content)

A kaolao is a large basket woven from bamboo or wood. lvm 23:53:36 5/16/02 (no content)

Supplement to the case of Huiqin. Changru 18:22:14 5/16/02 (766)

Good. Zhong Bushuo 09:47:39 5/17/02 (no content)

This shows Foguo's excellence even more clearly. lvm 23:55:57 5/16/02 (no content)

To appear is to see. Vajra Glare 16:17:24 5/16/02 (no content)

28. Unable to Shake It Off

[Original Koan]

Liu Yiweng had once studied under Foyin. He was quite self-assured and held Zhenjing in great contempt. One day, returning from Yunju, he stopped to visit Guizong. Upon reaching the Dharma Hall and seeing Zhenjing, he asked, "Elder, how many years have you been writing plays here?" Zhenjing replied, "I have been waiting especially for the musician to arrive." Liu said, "I will not join this troupe." Zhenjing said, "But you are already on this stage."

Liu hesitated [Elder's marginal note: Why did he not say, "I came to watch the monk perform a play"? Dead already!]. Zhenjing clapped his hands and said, "Frog Chan—you can only jump once." On another occasion, while seated, Liu pointed to Zhenjing's patched robe and asked, "What do you call this?" Zhenjing replied, "A Chan robe." Liu asked, "What is Chan?" Zhenjing shook it out and said, "It cannot be shaken off."

Liu had nothing to say [Elder's marginal note: Killed again! Why, as he shook it out, did he not make a tearing sound with his mouth and say, "Torn! Shattered!"]. Zhenjing struck him once and said, "With skills like yours, you would test this old monk?!"

[Sawing Open a Steelyard Weight]

Ha, ha! At Chan Master Zhenjing's place at Guizong, a challenger arrived. After two rounds of advance and retreat, Liu Yiweng was defeated and withdrew. Seeing how helpless Liu Yiweng was, and how easily he was killed, the Elder supplied two replies

on his behalf, allowing Liu Yiweng to jump once more. If it had gone this way, the exchange would have been as follows:

First scene:

“Elder, how many years have you been writing plays here?”

“I have been waiting especially for an accompanist like you to arrive.”

“I will not get involved in this business of yours.”

“Are you not already on this stage?”

“I came to watch the monk perform a play.”

How should Chan Master Zhenjing respond next? The person before him is not a student; he cannot simply “flick his sleeves and return to the abbot’s quarters.”

He could very well say, “Where did Old Liu pick up the tune he is singing?”

Second scene:

Pointing to his patched robe, he asked, “What do you call this?”

“A Chan robe.”

“What is Chan?”

“It cannot be shaken off.”

Making a tearing sound with his mouth, he said, “Torn! Shattered!”

How should Chan Master Zhenjing respond now? Never mind whether this “Chan” can be shaken off; now even the “robe” is gone.

To speak up for the Chan master: He should put on his patched robe, point at Liu Yiweng, and say, “The torn pieces are yours!”

29. Head Seat Huiyuan

[Original Text of the Koan]

Hui’an Monastery in Fengxin County, Hongzhou, stood beside a main road. Monastics traveling to and from Huanglong, Letan, Dongshan, and Huangbo all passed by it. Once, when its Dharma seat had long been vacant, the prefect sent a letter to Chan Master Zhenjing of Baofeng, ordering him to choose someone to

serve as its abbot. The head-seat monks, monastic administrators, senior elders, and others all shrank from the undertaking.

At that time there was Head Seat Yuan, a northerner who stood alone in solitary firmness. Having studied under Huitang and Zhenjing, he had truly attained realization, yet he quietly lived and worked among the community, and no one knew of him. Hearing that the head-seat monks and administrators were declining the appointment, he was willing to accept it. He said to Zhenjing, “Can Huiyuan go?” Zhenjing replied, “You can go.” He then wrote back and recommended Yuan.

When Yuan received the official document, he immediately took his leave. At the time, Zhandang was serving as head-seat monk. He asked Yuan, “Once you go, how will you sustain the monastery?” Yuan replied, “I have little merit or good fortune. I should form affinities with everyone. I will carry a bamboo basket on my back and go through the streets begging alms to provide for the community.” Zhandang said, “It must be someone like you, elder brother.” He then composed a verse to see him off: “Master, as you enter Xinwu, you will guide and gather the multitude of beings. First rein in the donkey’s hooves; then extend the Buddha’s hand.”

“Point out right and wrong; distinguish fair from foul. Wield the sword that kills and gives life; give the lion’s roar. Respond to the capacities of living beings; untie the mouth of the cloth sack. Whether they turn east, west, south, or north, directly make pearls circle and jade move. Let all those who have forgotten themselves suddenly emerge from ignorance’s old mold. Ah, ha, ha! See three below three; three times three makes nine. Patriarch after patriarch transmits it; Buddha after Buddha hands it on.”

After Yuan took up residence at Hui’an, he went out every day to solicit alms. Whenever travelers arrived temporarily, he invited them to rest at the monastery, saying, “Please remain here and rest; allow me to return and prepare an offering.” For thirty years, he continued in this way, unchanged through wind and rain. He rebuilt the Buddha Hall, the revolving scripture repository, and the Arhat Hall; whatever a Chan monastery ought to have, he restored and provided.

Chan Master Sixin of Huanglong came to visit him. Yuan said, “Elder Xin, you are always fond of using the move of ‘unwitting wisdom’ to brush off students. Stay here tonight, and I will discuss with you some Dharma gates, both subtle and profound.” Xin was intimidated. He told his attendant, “This fellow truly understands. I cannot contend with him tooth and nail. Better to leave.” He departed without staying the night.

Yuan eventually passed away at Hui’an. After his cremation, three of the six sense faculties remained uncorrupted, innumerable relics were obtained, and an extraordinary fragrance filled the room for months without ceasing. When Fengxin

suffered the ravages of war, everything was devastated and nothing remained; Hui'an alone, with all its halls, stood solemnly intact. Was this not the fulfillment of his vows, protected by numinous beings? Those everywhere who now sit back and enjoy ready-made benefits—on hearing of Yuan's example, can they fail to feel ashamed in their hearts?

[The Elder's Marginal Notes]

Literati and scholars merely play with words and ink. How often have they ever personally seen their original nature!?

Head Seat Yuan truly embodied the conduct of a great bodhisattva.

Zhandang had already realized the Way and was moreover serving as head-seat monk. Why did he not dare to go?

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

Hui'an Monastery was situated beside a major thoroughfare between several famous Chan monasteries. Traveling monastics frequently passed through, so why did no one dare to become its abbot? Surely it was not because they feared seeing people; how could Buddhadharma fear having many people? The real reason was that the place was poor and unimposing; perhaps even food and lodging were a problem.

If obtaining food had not been a problem, why would Head Seat Yuan, before leaving, have made the resolve to "carry a bamboo basket on his back and go through the streets begging alms to provide for the community"? As the elder of an entire monastery, he himself would carry a large bamboo basket and beg along the streets in order to supply the community's meals. What a sight that was! How many people, ancient or modern, could make such a resolve as Head Seat Yuan did? After Head Seat Yuan went there, whenever he encountered

traveling monastics stopping temporarily, he would invite them to rest first in the monastery: "Allow Huiyuan to return and prepare an offering." Unless he went out to seek alms, he could not even provide a single meal. Chan Master Huiyuan began with nothing and persisted in this way for a long time. Not only did food cease to be a problem, but "the Buddha Hall, revolving scripture repository, and Arhat Hall—whatever a Chan monastery ought to have—were all restored and provided." Every building that a monastery should possess was constructed.

This place had once suffered the ravages of war; all the nearby buildings were destroyed, yet the many halls of Hui'an Monastery alone remained entirely intact.

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, the author of this book, exclaimed: “Was this not the fulfillment of his vows, protected by numinous beings? Those everywhere who now sit back and enjoy ready-made benefits—on hearing of Yuan’s example, can they fail to feel ashamed in their hearts?” The Elder also praised him, saying: “Head Seat Yuan truly embodied the conduct of a great bodhisattva.”

The Elder not only praised Head Seat Yuan, but also criticized those who had not dared to go and reside there—the “head-seat monks, monastic administrators, senior elders, and others.” He criticized them as “literati and scholars [who] merely play with words and ink. How often have they ever personally seen their original nature!?” Of course, among these people were also some who genuinely cared for and helped Huiyuan. Chan Master Zhandang was one of them.

He saw Huiyuan off and personally composed a verse for him. This verse should not be underestimated. At the time, Zhandang was the head-seat monk, the foremost seat, and highly respected. News that he had composed a farewell verse would have brought Huiyuan considerable convenience. The Elder, however, did not mince words in criticizing Zhandang as well: “Zhandang had already realized the Way and was moreover serving as head-seat monk. Why did he not dare to go?”

Head Seat Yuan was not only able to do what was difficult and endure what was difficult to endure; his Dharma eye was also clear and his understanding thorough. One day, the renowned Chan Master Sixin of Huanglong was passing Hui’an Chan Monastery with his assembly. Huiyuan said to him, “You are always fond of using the move of ‘unwitting wisdom’ to brush off students.”

“Do not leave today. Stay here tonight, and I will discuss with you some Dharma gates, both subtle and profound.” What is “unwitting wisdom”? The expression comes from the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch: “Those of the lowest capacity possess the highest wisdom; those of the highest capacity possess unwitting wisdom.” Yet in Chan Master Sixin of Huanglong’s recorded sayings, one does not find him using the expression “unwitting wisdom” repeatedly.

When Head Seat Yuan said that he used “unwitting wisdom” to brush off students, he was criticizing him for putting on the airs of one “of the highest capacity” and disregarding later students. He intended to reason the matter out with him that evening. This struck at the heart of the matter. Chan Master Sixin of Huanglong became afraid and did not dare accept the challenge. He told his attendant, “It seems this fellow truly understands Chan. I cannot engage in a battle of words with him or get serious with him; better to leave and save ourselves the trouble.” Thus, he did not dare stay there for the night, but led everyone away that very night.

Later, Chan Master Huiyuan entered parinirvāṇa at Hui’an Monastery. After cremation, three of his six sense faculties remained uncorrupted—Zhandang had

one that remained uncorrupted: the eye faculty—and there were countless relics. Moreover, an extraordinary fragrance filled the room and continued for months.

[The Following Content Comes from a Forum]

Head Seat Huiyuan's Verse: lvm 08:54:47 5/30/02 (192)

Zhandang had already realized the Way and was moreover serving as head-seat monk. Why did he not dare to go? Little Dharma Brother 20:40:43 5/29/02 (no content)

Speaking of what is before our eyes: lvm 20:46:30 5/29/02 (68)

"See three below three; three times three makes nine." What does this mean? manman 18:37:31 5/29/02 (no content)

This is like the saying, "The first three, three; the latter three, three": lvm 19:35:59 5/29/02 (2K)

30. The Exemplary Conduct of Dharma Cloud

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Fayun Gao had visited the halls of many masters. When he entered the room of Yuantong Ji, a man of the Way, Ji raised the case of Zhaozhou asking Touzi, "How does one who has undergone the Great Death come back to life?" Touzi said, "You may not travel by night; you must arrive at dawn." What does this mean? Gao replied, "A great kindness is hard to repay."

[The Elder's marginal note: "It is indeed an excellent saying! What a pity that he happened upon it only by chance!"] Yuantong greatly praised him. A few days later, Gao was asked to stand in for the master and hold the whisk, but his responses were slow and dull, and the whole hall burst into laughter. Gao was ashamed. The next day, he specially offered tea to the assembly. As he set the tea utensils on the table, he was too embarrassed to know what to do with himself.

By chance, he knocked over the tea utensils. A ladle fell to the ground and bounced several times. He awakened to the answer; his Chan responses thereafter became swift and sharp, and no one dared contend with him. Later, when he went to Zhenjing, he saw a patriarchal verse: "The mind is like the realm of empty space; it reveals dharmas equal to empty space. When one realizes empty space, there is neither 'is' nor 'is not.'" He was suddenly greatly awakened. [The Elder's marginal note: "Constantly reading this verse can also bring awakening."]

Later, when he became an abbot, he would often say during his Dharma talks: “This monk awakened to the Chan of the square inch on the twenty-first day of the eleventh month in the third year of Shaosheng.” He also said: “In the third year of Xining, when my tent was at Fengxiang Prefecture on official business, I captured eighteen prefectures of Mount Hua. You eggplants and gourds—how could you possibly know?”

An imperial edict appointed him to reside at Fayun. On the day he opened the Dharma hall, a palace envoy arrived carrying imperial incense and requested that his Recorded Sayings be submitted to the throne. Hong Juefan was then among the assembly, so he had an attendant invite him to compile the Recorded Sayings, saying, “Please give this old monk some face.” Juefan compiled and presented them. After reading them, he said, “If one wishes to learn Chan that resolves birth and death, one must come to this old monk. But if one wants flowery and ornate parallel prose, idle words, and long-winded talk, then my brother Hong is the man.” Throughout his life, Fayun’s spirit overshadowed all other quarters, and he treated his contemporaries as children. Since his realization so greatly surpassed that of others, he dared to speak in this way.

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

Zhaozhou asked Chan Master Touzi, “How does one who has undergone the Great Death come back to life?”—When the thieving mind has completely died away and one directly realizes the empty quiescence of all phenomena, how does one come alive again and give rise to wondrous functioning?

Chan Master Touzi said, “You may not travel by night; you must arrive at dawn.”—You may not travel at night, but you must arrive when day breaks.

Zhaozhou said, “I was already a Hou Bai, but he is an even greater Hou Hei.”—I already deceive people like Hou Bai, but who would have known that he is like Hou Hei, deceiving people even more thoroughly! (Hou Bai and Hou Hei were the names of two swindlers. Hou Hei’s tricks were more advanced, and he even deceived Hou Bai. See Qin Guan’s “Account of the Two Hous.”)

What are these two great elders talking about? Zhaozhou’s question about “one who has undergone the Great Death coming back to life” is still somewhat understandable. But isn’t Touzi’s “You may not travel by night; you must arrive at dawn” simply meant to trap one completely? If one may not travel at night, how can one arrive at dawn? In fact, you have trapped yourself, because you assume that one must travel in order to arrive. You are obstructed by your own “knowledge.”

Must one truly travel in order to arrive? Not necessarily. Suppose you are already at home and are still heading home—would you need to travel? Suppose you have

never died—why ask about coming alive after death? Is this not what is meant by "originally complete and present"? Is this not what we Buddhist practitioners seek to realize? The original essence and its function are nondual; why must we still leave home?

Where would we go to seek it? Thus, Zhaozhou's question about dying and then coming back to life was already sufficiently deceptive. Yet who would have known that Touzi was even more adept at inventing shameless new ways to return the trap? That is why Zhaozhou answered him, "I was already a Hou Bai, but he is an even greater Hou Hei."

Yuantong Ji asked Fayun Gao what the words "You may not travel by night; you must arrive at dawn" meant. If one answered by explaining the principle as above, even if one made Chan Master Touzi's meaning entirely clear, it would still be "conceptual deliberation"—counting another person's treasure, which has nothing to do with oneself. One must answer with one's own saying, as Chan Master Touzi did.

He answered so directly; you too must answer just as directly before you can walk hand in hand with him.

When Yuantong Ji asked about the meaning of "You may not travel by night; you must arrive at dawn," Fayun Gao did not engage in conceptual deliberation. Instead, he directly answered, "A great kindness is hard to repay."—Minor kindnesses and favors can be repaid: there is giving and there is recompense, the two standing in opposition, which is precisely "duality." But if the kindness is great, it is hard to repay.

What is greatness? Greatness has nothing outside it! Since there is nothing outside it, essence and function are one suchness. How could essence and function still be separated? This response is excellent. The Elder said, "It is indeed an excellent saying! What a pity that he happened upon it only by chance!" Why say that he happened upon it only by chance? Read on, and you will understand.

Yuantong Ji greatly praised this response. More than ten days later, he asked Gao to stand in for the master and hold the whisk, speaking Dharma on his behalf. But Gao's words came slowly, and the whole hall burst into laughter. He himself was deeply ashamed. The following day, he invited the assembly for tea. In his fluster, he knocked over the tea utensils. Seeing the water ladle bounce on the ground, he suddenly dropped his cloth bag; in an instant, luminous awareness was naturally and genuinely revealed.

From then on, his Chan responses were swift and irresistible. People today understand a little Chan principle and think they have arrived home, but the

ancients were not like this. Although “his Chan responses became swift and sharp, and no one dared contend with him,” he did not think that he had arrived home.

Otherwise, he would have missed the step beyond and would later not have been suddenly greatly awakened at Chan Master Zhenjing’s place upon seeing the patriarchal verse. The verse says: “The mind is like the realm of empty space; it reveals dharmas equal to empty space. When one realizes empty space, there is neither ‘is’ nor ‘is not.’” The Elder praised this verse: “Constantly reading this verse can also bring awakening.” We later students should therefore read this verse often.

From Chan Master Gao’s later words, one can see that he truly “overshadowed all other quarters and treated his contemporaries as children.” Such remarks as “I awakened to the Chan of the square inch,” “I captured eighteen prefectures of Mount Hua” (overshadowing all other quarters), and “you eggplants and gourds” (treating his contemporaries as children)—without realization that greatly surpassed that of others, how could he have dared to speak in this way?

The emperor issued an edict asking him to become abbot of the Fayun Dharma center. On the day he opened the Dharma hall, an imperial envoy came from the palace carrying fine incense bestowed by the emperor in congratulations, and also requested his Recorded Sayings for presentation to the emperor. Hong Juefan, renowned for his literary skill, happened to be there at the time, so he asked Hong Juefan to write the Recorded Sayings on his behalf: “Please give this old monk some face.”

After the Recorded Sayings had been written, he read them and said, “Anyone who wishes to learn Chan that can resolve birth and death should come to this old monk. Anyone who wishes to learn flowery and ornate parallel prose, idle words, and long-winded talk should go to my brother Hong.” In fact, these words, along with the “eighteen prefectures of Mount Hua,” were humorous; they were the natural expression of a mind entirely free of even the slightest attachment. Ha, ha! He was truly like a gourd floating on water—touch it, and it turns.

31. Vajra Eyes

[Original Koan]

When Chan Master Zhan Tang passed away, the Master asked Juefan to record his life and deeds. He also obtained a letter of introduction from Chan Master Zhao of Long’an and traveled especially to Jingnan to request an inscription for the stūpa from Layman Wujin. Upon first meeting Wujin, Wujin rose and asked, “Did you come all this way in nothing but straw sandals?” He replied, “I have begged my way for

several thousand li to come and see you, Sir." Wujin asked again, "How old are you?" He replied, "Twenty-four."

Wujin then asked, "How old is the water buffalo?" He replied, "Two." Wujin asked again, "Where did you learn such empty tricks?" He replied, "Today, in seeing you in person." Wujin laughed and said, "Sit down and have some tea."

As soon as he sat down, Wujin asked again, "You have come from afar. What is the matter?" The Master immediately rose, stepped forward, and said, "Chan Master Letan has passed away. After his cremation, his eyes, teeth, and rosary beads remained intact, and countless relics were found. The elder monks of the mountain all wish for your masterful brush to compose an inscription for his stūpa, to inspire later students. I have come especially from afar, daring to trouble your honored hearing." Wujin said, "I am here under punishment and have never written for others."

"Now I have a question for you. If you can answer it, I will write the stūpa inscription. If you cannot, I will give you five strings of cash for traveling expenses; then return to Tuṣita and study Chan with Master Congyue." The Master said, "Please ask, Sir." Wujin said, "I have heard that Elder Zhun's eyes remained intact. Is that so?" He replied, "Yes." Wujin said, "I am not asking about those eyes."

He asked, "What eyes are you asking about, Sir?" Wujin said, "The vajra eyes." He replied, "If they are vajra eyes, they are at the tip of your brush, Sir." Wujin said, "In that case, this old man shall bring forth their radiance for him, so that they may illuminate heaven and earth." The Master then stepped forward and said, "How fortunate my late teacher is! I thank you, Sir, for the stūpa inscription." Wujin repeatedly assented and smiled.

Its general purport reads: "Relics are not mentioned in the writings of Confucius or Laozi. When the World-Honored One, the former Buddha, entered final extinction, his disciples collected his relics and erected stūpas to venerate them. Zhaozhou Congshen had more than ten thousand relics. In more recent times, wherever the smoke from Longqing Xian and Baizhang Su reached, relics were formed.

"In general, those who leave home do so because birth and death are a great matter. If, when birth and death arrives, they do not know where they will end up, they are not as good as an untroubled fellow in a little village. At death, they give their final instructions, each matter clearly set forth. The physical body of the four elements is provisionally compounded from various conditions.

"From the very beginning, how could relics have any intrinsic nature? If one's pure conduct is immaculate, one's wholesome karma firm, one's spiritual clarity open and penetrating, and one foreknows the repayment of one's karmic debt without alarm

or fear, then the direct and circumstantial karmic retributions will not differ by a hair's breadth. Worldly people are coarse-minded. Throughout the twelve periods of the day, they never attend to the subtle continuous stream in the matter that is fundamental to them, yet they give rise to great self-conceit. This is the karmic creditor; ghosts come to borrow the house. If one is like this and yet wishes for relics to flow forth like pearls and for all the sense faculties to remain intact, how could that be possible?"

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

Why not reply: "The same age as you, Sir!"

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

The stūpa inscription that Layman Wujin, Zhang Shangying, wrote for Chan Master Zhan Tang has already been mentioned in "15. Relics Are Firm and Hard." In order to obtain this inscription for Chan Master Zhan Tang, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, the author of Armory of the Chan School in this book, went through quite a few twists and turns.

After Chan Master Zhan Tang entered parinirvāṇa, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao handled the funeral arrangements and did so on a grand scale. Not only did he invite Hong Juefan, then celebrated for his writing, to record Chan Master Zhan Tang's life and deeds; he also wished to invite Layman Wujin, Zhang Shangying, whose name was renowned throughout Chan circles, to compose a stūpa inscription so that a stūpa could be erected for veneration. At that time, Chan Master Dahui was still young and did not know Zhang Shangying, so he asked Chan Master Zhao of Long'an to write a letter of introduction. Carrying Zhao's letter to Zhang Shangying, he traveled several thousand li to find him.

Seeing this young man arrive from afar, dusty from travel, Zhang Shangying rose and asked, "Did you really come running all this way in straw sandals?" Dahui replied, "I have begged my way along the road and traveled several thousand li, especially to pay my respects to you." Zhang Shangying asked, "How old are you this year?" He replied, "Twenty-four."

Zhang Shangying suddenly changed the subject and asked, "How old is the water buffalo?" Ha! Like the "Buddha's hand" in "3. All Is Already Complete," this question raises a strange peak out of level ground—let us see how you will get past it! Dahui replied, "Two." These are two different matters: I have not come to study Chan; I have come to see you about something else.

He was anxious to obtain the stūpa inscription and had not intended to exchange Chan repartee. Yet how could Layman Wujin readily let him off? When one meets a

swordsman on the road, one must present one's sword. This barrier had to be passed.

Thus the Elder commented: "Why not reply: 'The same age as you, Sir!'" Zhang Shangying indeed did not let him off, pressing him with another question: "Where did you learn such empty tricks?" Seeing that he could not avoid this barrier, Dahui had no choice but to exchange Chan repartee: "Today, in seeing you in person"—I just learned it from you! This reply perfectly matched the question. Zhang Shangying smiled in satisfaction and invited him to sit down and have tea.

Layman Wujin asked him, "Why have you come so far to find me?" Dahui stood up, took a step forward, and solemnly informed him: "Chan Master Zhan Tang, abbot of the Letan Dharma center, has entered parinirvāṇa. After his cremation, his eyes, teeth, and rosary beads remained intact, and there were countless relics.

"Everyone wishes to ask for your masterful brush to compose a stūpa inscription, so that a stūpa may be erected for veneration and later students may be inspired." At the time, Zhang Shangying had been demoted from office, hence his saying that he was "here under punishment." He was unwilling to write so readily and wanted first to exchange Chan repartee.

If you can pass this barrier, I will write the stūpa inscription for you. If you cannot, I will give you five strings of cash for traveling expenses; go to Chan Master Congyue of Tuṣita—Zhang Shangying's teacher—and study Chan there. Dahui had traveled several thousand li to get there; how could he give up halfway? He immediately replied, "Please ask, Sir."

Zhang Shangying began by asking about the intact eyes, then suddenly brought up "vajra eyes." Dahui immediately replied, "If they are vajra eyes, they are at the tip of your brush, Sir." He did not follow Layman Wujin's line of speech; in his reply, he never departed from the stūpa inscription. Look at the questions and answers of people today: they cling to the thread of words and, before they reach the end of the exchange, have already forgotten the critical phrase. If birth and death were suddenly before them, who knows where their former Chan would have been forgotten to!

Where utmost sincerity reaches, even metal and stone will open. Seeing Dahui's sincerity, Layman Wujin agreed to write the stūpa inscription for Chan Master Zhan Tang. An inscription is honored by the brush of a renowned writer; how great an honor it was then to obtain a stūpa inscription written by Layman Wujin! Thus Dahui gave thanks, Wujin smiled, and the stūpa inscription emerged …

Everyone, please consider this sentence in the stūpa inscription: "If, when birth and death arrives, they do not know where they will end up, they are not as good as an

untroubled fellow in a little village.” Tell me: the whereabouts of what is unknown? Are the untroubled fellows in little villages not also “karmic creditors, with ghosts coming to borrow the house”?

[From the Forum]

If this could be known, why go through all that trouble? Changru 17:12:20 6/01/02 (no content)

Therefore, Chan Master Xuedou said: lvm 17:59:45 6/01/02 (170)

The teacher creates a “fly” out of nothing. Qinglong 18:56:17 5/31/02 (no content)

Seeing three yields three; three threes make nine. lvm 19:23:43 5/31/02 (no content)

Thirty-Two: Even a Mouse Protects the Dharma

[Original Text of the Koan]

Venerable Zhi of Fuyan was from Dongchuan. When he first traveled in search of instruction, he met Venerable Zhenru and realized right view. At Weishan, he served in the guestmaster’s quarters as a stand-in monk, holding the fly whisk and teaching on his master’s behalf. Because he made an error in speech, he asked to resign and become the garden steward in order to atone for his fault. Zhenru said, “Your blessings are slight. Tending the garden and providing for the community is what suits you.”

After two years, he asked for a replacement, bade farewell to Zhenru, and wished to go and study with Zhenjing and Wuzu. Zhenru said, “Travel everywhere and visit the exemplary sites of the former sages. Go on your way; do not delay.” He first went to Dongshan, where he and the master were in accord during private interviews. Zhenjing appointed him to lead the community as a stand-in monk. After a long time, he went again to the assembly of Master Zhongxuan of Sizhu. From time to time, he also went to see Wuzu. The patriarch examined and tested him and found that he indeed possessed exceptional ability. Wuzu said to Sizhu, “Zhi, the head-seat monk, is an accomplished person of the Chan communities. Why do you not appoint him to lead the assembly?” Sizhu followed his advice. Wuzu also praised his understanding and conduct in his Dharma-hall talks.

Li Xiuzhuan was military commissioner of Changsha, and Sizhu recommended him in a letter. Before long, when Fuyan’s abbot’s seat became vacant, Ping Purong also recommended someone. The commissioner said, “We should first act on Sizhu’s recommendation.” But although they searched for the letter, they could not find it and did not know the recommended person’s name. Once, while he was seated with

guests, a mouse dragged a scroll down from a shelf and brought it before him. When he opened and examined it, it proved to be the “Letter of Sizhu Recommending Head-Seat Monk Zhi.” The commissioner found this astonishing and therefore earnestly invited him.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

This koan involves quite a number of people. Let us first set out part of the lineage chart, and then identify them one by one.

Yunju Yuanyou Zhihai Zhiqing Sizhu Zhongxuan

(Huanglong branch) Huanglong Huinan Baofeng Kewen

(Linji school) Shishuang Chuyuan (Yangqi branch) Yangqi Fanghui Baiyun Shouduan Wuzu Fayan

Cuiyan Kezhen Dawei Muzhe Venerable Zhi of Fuyan

The Weishan, Dongshan, Wuzu, and Sizhu mentioned in the text are all place names; in ancient times, people were often known by the names of places. Chan Master Dawei Muzhe was Chan Master Muzhe Zhenru of Dawei in Tanzhou; Weishan refers to the place where Venerable Zhenru resided. Chan Master Baofeng Kewen was Chan Master Kewen Yun’an of Baofeng in Longxing Prefecture, also known as “Venerable Wen of Dongshan.” Wuzu refers to Chan Master Wuzu Fayan.

Under Venerable Muzhe Zhenru at Dawei, Venerable Zhi of Fuyan realized right view. At first, he served as a stand-in monk, holding the fly whisk and teaching on his master’s behalf. Later, because he had erred in speech, he resigned and went to grow vegetables. No wonder Venerable Zhenru said that his blessings were slight. After growing vegetables for two years, he sought someone to replace him and wished to study with Chan Master Zhenjing and Chan Master Fayan.

His teacher instructed him: “You should visit teachers everywhere. Go quickly; do not delay.” So he set out. “He first went to Dongshan” means that he first went to Chan Master Zhenjing. “They were in accord during private interviews” means that in private instruction he was deeply in accord with Zhenjing’s teaching. Chan Master Zhenjing again asked him to serve as a stand-in monk, holding the fly whisk and teaching on his behalf.

After a long time had passed, he went again to Chan Master Zhongxuan of Sizhu. He also visited Chan Master Wuzu Fayan from time to time, since the two monasteries were not far apart. After Chan Master Fayan examined him, he found that he indeed possessed exceptional ability.

Once, when Wuzu Fayan met Sizhu Zhongxuan, he recommended him, saying: “Your head-seat monk Zhi is an accomplished person of the Chan communities. Why do you not ask him to lead the assembly?” Venerable Zhongxuan accepted Fayan’s advice and asked him to serve as a stand-in monk, holding the fly whisk and teaching on his behalf. Ha! He had already served as the head-seat monk in three places. Chan Master Fayan also frequently praised his understanding and conduct.

Chan Master Zhongxuan of Sizhu had once submitted to the authorities the “Letter of Sizhu Recommending Head-Seat Monk Zhi,” recommending that, should any practice center lack an abbot, he be appointed to preside over it.

Before long, a vacancy arose at Fuyan Chan Monastery. The authorities believed they should first act on Sizhu Zhongxuan’s recommendation—evidently, many Chan monasteries had submitted recommendations—but they could not find the letter, had forgotten whom it recommended, and so set the matter aside.

While Li, the military commissioner responsible for this matter, was receiving guests, he saw a mouse carry a letter from the bookshelf. Upon looking at it, he found that it was precisely the “Letter of Sizhu Recommending Head-Seat Monk Zhi.” Li was greatly astonished that a mouse could carry a letter of recommendation. He immediately wrote a letter of appointment, inviting him to preside over the Fuyan practice center. From then on, Head-Seat Monk Zhi became known as Venerable Zhi of Fuyan.

Those who protect the Dharma are not limited to bodhisattvas, nor are those who promote it limited to dragons and devas. Even a mouse understands how to protect the Dharma and how to bring someone forward. (The Bodhisattva Precepts say: “One must not keep cats or civets.”)

XXXIII. Liberating Beings in the Intermediate State

[Original Koan Text]

Master Shen of Letan was from Hedong and a Dharma heir of Zhenjing.

There was an attendant named Wu. Once, in the guest-reception quarters, he saw the head of a match fall to the ground and suddenly had an awakening. He went directly to the abbot’s quarters to report his realization, but Master Shen gave a shout. Thereafter Wu lost his mind and hanged himself with a rope in the eastern latrine of the Hall of Long Life. At night he would often appear in the Sutra Repository, the guest-reception quarters, and the latrine. He moved shoes and carried water bottles, causing the whole community much distress.

Master Zhantang was traveling in Zhejiang. When he returned to serve as head seat and heard of this matter, he deliberately went to relieve himself in the eastern latrine of the Hall of Long Life late at night. The lamp on the wall gave off a faint light, then suddenly went out. Just as he was taking off his clothes, Wu brought a water bottle. Zhantang said, “Not yet. Wait until I have taken off my clothes.” After undressing, he took the bottle and went to relieve himself in the very stall where Wu had hanged himself. Before long, Wu brought him toilet slips. As he was leaving, Zhantang called, “Take the bottle away.”

As soon as Wu took it, Zhantang seized him and felt his hand: at times it seemed soft, at times hard. He asked, “Are you Attendant Wu? Were you not the one who, in the guest-reception quarters, awakened on seeing the head of a match fall? In investigating Chan and studying the Way, one need only know where one’s original destiny comes to rest.”

“When you moved Head Seat Duan’s shoes in the Sutra Hall, was that not what you had awakened to at that time? And when you moved a pillow in the guest-reception quarters, was that not what you had awakened to at that time? Each night, when you carry bottles and water for people here, is that not what you had awakened to at that time?”

“Why do you not know where it comes to rest, and instead keep troubling the community here? Tomorrow I shall urge the community to read the Buddhist canon for you, collect money, offer gruel, and hold a memorial for you. You should seek liberation elsewhere and not remain attached here.” Having spoken, he gave him a push. It fell with a hollow sound, like a pile of tiles and rubble collapsing, and thereafter it left no trace. One of Zhantang’s arms became cold as ice and did not return to normal for more than half a month. It was not a living person who had come while possessed by yin; such was the cold energy that invaded him.

[The Elder’s Marginal Comment]

It is regrettable that the final words were not thoroughly liberating. When he had asked, “Why do you keep troubling the community here?” he should then have pulled the man’s hand, drawn a circle, and said, “Redress your grievance here!”

[Sawing Through a Steelyard Weight]

Attendant Wu, a disciple of Master Shen of Letan, first had an awakening upon seeing the head of a match fall in the guest-reception quarters. Later, after being scolded, he hanged himself.

His death was not worthwhile. The scolding was meant to spur him to advance further and higher; how could his mind be so narrow? After his death, his

intermediate-state body did not go on to take rebirth. He continued to perform an attendant's duties, appearing at night in the Sutra Repository, the guest-reception quarters, and the latrine, and continuing to straighten shoes, move bottles, and so forth. Imagine it: everything is in good order, and then you suddenly discover that shoes or bottles have been moved. What would you think? Thus "the whole community suffered because of him."

Master Zhantang traveled in Zhejiang and then returned here to serve as head seat. Hearing of the matter, he was not afraid of ghosts and deliberately went to the latrine at midnight. The lamp on the latrine wall glimmered faintly and then suddenly went out. Zhantang ignored it and continued undressing. Attendant Wu came carrying a bottle. Zhantang said, "I do not need the bottle yet; wait until I have finished undressing."

After undressing, he took the bottle and deliberately went to relieve himself in the very stall where Attendant Wu had hanged himself. Shortly afterward, Attendant Wu brought him toilet slips, which served much the same purpose as toilet paper today.

Just as Attendant Wu had handed over the toilet slips and was about to leave, Zhantang called to him: "Take the bottle away!" Zhantang was going to seize the ghost. As Wu reached out for the bottle, Zhantang grabbed his hand. It was not the hand of a living person: it seemed both soft and hard. Zhantang then prepared to liberate him: "You are Attendant Wu, are you not?"

"Did you not have an awakening when you saw the head of a match fall in the guest-reception quarters? In investigating Chan and studying the Way, one seeks only to understand where one's original destiny comes to rest. Have you not already understood it?"

"When you moved Head Seat Duan's shoes in the Sutra Hall, moved a pillow in the guest-reception quarters, and carried bottles and water here each night—were these not all what you had awakened to at that time? Why, then, do you still not know where it comes to rest? Do not trouble the community any longer. Tomorrow I shall ask everyone to recite scriptures for you, collect money, offer gruel, and hold a memorial for you."

"Do not remain here. Seek liberation elsewhere." Having finished speaking, he pushed forward. "Crash, crash, crash!" It was like knocking over a pile of bricks and tiles. From then on, there were no more ghostly disturbances there. Ghostly energy is yin and cold; the arm Master Zhantang used to seize the ghost remained cold for half a month before returning to normal.

Not every intermediate-state body takes rebirth within forty-nine days. If a great attachment obstructs the mind, one becomes a solitary ghost or wandering spirit.

Had Attendant Wu not encountered Master Zhantang, who knows how long he would have continued causing trouble? Yet Master Zhantang's words of liberation lacked, at the end, a phrase to guide him onward. Therefore the Elder commented: "It is regrettable that the final words were not thoroughly liberating."

When he had asked, "Why do you keep troubling the community here?" he should then have pulled Wu's hand, drawn a circle, and said, "Redress your grievance here!" If he had done so, perhaps Attendant Wu would have had a great awakening at those very words.

[The Following Content Is from a Forum]

Amitābha Buddha! … Yuanzhi 23:07:51 6/04/02 (No content)

What is the meaning of this drawing and response in the Elder's marginal comment? jingke 13:11:11 6/04/02 (No content)

How could Zhantang not have known this meaning? The Elder deliberately exposed a flaw so that you all would see through it! Chandi Yi 14:30:14 6/04/02 (No content)

Do you know what the Elder meant? Zhiyue 19:41:07 6/04/02 (No content)

If you cannot see through it, then just be a follower of the school of conceptual understanding. I bow to you. Chandi Yi 19:54:05 6/04/02 (No content)

A donkey's head does not match a horse's mouth! Zhiyue 19:57:27 6/04/02 (No content)

It does exactly what is needed to dispel the emotional views in your mind. Chandi Yi 20:06:12 6/04/02 (No content)

If you follow that post, I would dare to scold you—do you believe it? Zhiyue 20:24:37 6/04/02 (No content)

Thirty-Four: Cause and Effect in the World

[Original Text of the Koan]

Xu Zhike, a native of Piling, had once been recommended at the provincial level but returned home after failing the metropolitan examination. While his boat was moored at Pingwang in Wujiang, he dreamed one night that a man in white said to him: "You have accumulated no hidden virtue; therefore, you did not pass the examination." Zhike replied, "My family is poor. I have no means with which to give to others." The man in white said, "Why not study medicine? I will help you with

wisdom.” Zhike immediately awoke. Upon returning home, he acted on these words and indeed attained the skill of Bian Que and Hua Tuo.

Whenever anyone was ill, whether rich or poor, he examined them and prescribed medicine without accepting payment. Sick people crowded his door, and none failed to recover. Later, he again received a provincial recommendation and went to the capital for the metropolitan examination. When his boat moored at Pingwang, he dreamed that the man in white came to see him again and gave him this verse: “Great is the merit of practicing medicine; Chen and Lou stand on either side. When names are called in the hall, six will be called five.” He could not understand its meaning. After he passed the examination and the names were announced, he had originally ranked sixth. Because the person before him failed the palace examination, he was raised to fifth place, and thus stood between Chen and Lou. Only then did he understand the earlier prophecy.

[Sawing Apart the Weight on the Scale]

This is a story of worldly cause and effect:

Xu Zhike of Piling failed the civil-service examination and took a boat home. When the boat reached Pingwang, he dreamed one night that a man in white said to him: “You have not accumulated hidden virtue, so you did not pass the examination.” Xu Zhike said, “My family is poor. I have no money to help others. How can I accumulate hidden virtue?” The man in white said, “Study medicine and treat people’s illnesses. I will help you.” After Xu Zhike returned home, he successfully studied medicine and treated illnesses without charge. Patients filled his doorway, and there was no illness he could not cure.

Later, Xu Zhike again traveled by boat to take the examination. When the boat reached Pingwang, he again dreamed of the man in white, who gave him this verse: “Great is the merit of practicing medicine; Chen and Lou stand on either side. When names are called in the hall, six will be called five.” He did not know what it meant.

After the examination, he was originally ranked sixth. Because someone before him failed the emperor’s palace examination, he became fifth (“six will be called five”). The fourth-ranked candidate was surnamed Chen, and the sixth-ranked candidate was surnamed Lou; he happened to stand between Chen and Lou (“Chen and Lou stand on either side”). Only then did he understand the meaning of the man in white’s verse.

This story has much in common with The Four Lessons of Liaofan: both concern cause and effect within the present life. Yet this present-life cause and effect does not lie apart from the cause and effect of the three times. Consider this: the man in

white did not help other unsuccessful candidates, but came specifically to help him. This, too, was a cause planted in a previous life.

Thirty-Five: Brocade Dharma Robe

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Foguang Wiai, of Yong'an in Suzhou, was summoned by imperial edict and took up residence at the Huilin Chan Monastery of Da Xiangguo Monastery. Empress Huigong once watched from behind a curtain as, after finishing his audience with the emperor, he rose into the air and departed. From then on, she made offerings to him of the imperial meals supplied by the Palace Provisioning Office and also had the remains of the Chan master's meals brought back to the palace. She further had a Dharma robe made of brocade and personally sewed a Chan plaque onto it before presenting it to him, thereby expressing the sincerity of her devotion to the Dharma. In winter, she bestowed upon him a red brocade canopy, as well as clothing, vessels, and the like.

Foguang then gave the Dharma robe bestowed by the palace to Chan Master Fayun Fozhao Gao. Fayun in turn sent it to his Dharma brother, Venerable Zhandang of Baofeng in Hongzhou, with a letter saying, "This brocade Dharma robe is for my younger Dharma brother. Follow the way of our late master." When Zhandang entered parinirvāṇa, it was left at the monastery to safeguard its gate, and it remains there to this day.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Foguang Wiai of Yong'an Chan Monastery in Suzhou won the emperor's favor, and the emperor invited him to serve as abbot of the Huilin Chan Monastery at Da Xiangguo Monastery. When the emperor received Chan Master Wiai, Empress Huigong watched from behind a curtain.

She saw Chan Master Wiai rise into the air and fly away as he departed. She therefore developed profound reverence for him and sent people to offer him brocade garments and imperial food. She personally sewed the Chan plaque onto the brocade Dharma robe, and she also had the imperial food left over from the Chan master's meal brought back to the palace for her own consumption, thereby expressing her sincerity.

In winter, she offered a red brocade canopy, as well as valuable items such as clothing and vessels. In fact, what the empress respected was not the Chan master's prajñā eye of true insight, but his spiritual power to rise into the air and depart. Though she was an empress, she was not one who practiced Chan and realized the

Way. Since she was not a practitioner, it is not for us to criticize her attachment to spiritual powers. We ourselves, however, must not become attached to spiritual powers.

Chan Master Foguang Wiai gave that precious brocade Dharma robe to Chan Master Fayun Fozhao Gao, who awakened upon seeing a gourd leap and who had fallen through "the eighteen prefectures of Mount Hua." Chan Master Fozhao then gave it to his Dharma brother, Venerable Zhandang, instructing him, "Follow the way of our late master." The "late master" referred to here is Chan Master Zhenjing Kewen.

After Venerable Zhandang entered parinirvāṇa, this brocade Dharma robe was left at the monastery to safeguard its gate. The author of this book, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, had studied Chan with Zhandang and had also traveled a great distance to seek an inscription for Zhandang's stūpa (see "31. Diamond Eyes"); the matter of this brocade Dharma robe was something he saw with his own eyes.

Thirty-Six: Non-Buddhist Dispositions

[Original Koan Text]

Chan Master Zhaojue moved from Letan to Huxi at the invitation of Wang Zichun, Director of the Palace Library. After opening the Dharma hall, he undertook every neglected task at once. There was not a day without formal teachings, informal instruction, or private interviews. He once said, "Elders of the same lineage, such as Huitang and Zhenjing, have only studied our late master's Chan; they have not attained our late master's Way."

The Master said:

Zhaojue took "ordinary and without affairs, establishing neither views nor intellectual understanding" as the Way, and sought no marvelous awakening. He instead regarded the genuine Dharma gate of sudden awakening and seeing one's nature, transmitted by all Buddhas and patriarchs through Deshan, Linji, Caodong, and Yunmen, as a "constructed establishment." He also regarded the statement in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, "Mountains, rivers, the great earth—all are things manifested within the wondrous, luminous true mind," as mere words above the diaphragm, likewise a "constructed establishment." He called the ancient masters' discussion of profundity and wondrousness Chan, thereby slandering the sages of old and blinding later generations. This is the sort of person with no sinew in the eyes and no blood beneath the skin. Following convention, they are inverted and yet complacently unaware—truly pitiable.

The Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment says: “Sentient beings in the Dharma-ending age aspire to realize the Way, but are not allowed to seek awakening; they merely increase their learning and enlarge their view of self.” It also says: “Although sentient beings in the Dharma-ending age seek good spiritual friends, they encounter those of wrong views and fail to attain correct awakening. This is called the disposition of non-Buddhist paths and the errors of misguided teachers; it is not the fault of sentient beings.” How could these be empty words?

Therefore, Chan Master Zhenjing said in an informal teaching: “Nowadays, there is a kind of fellow who clings to ‘ordinary mind is the Way,’ taking it to be the ultimate standard. Heaven is heaven, earth is earth, mountains are mountains, water is water, monastics are monastics, laypeople are laypeople; a full month has thirty days, and a short month has twenty-nine. All such people cling to grass and attach themselves to trees. Unknowingly and unaware, they go on becoming deluded.

“If you suddenly ask them, ‘How is my hand like the Buddha’s hand?’ they say, ‘It is the monk’s hand.’ If you ask, ‘How is my foot like a donkey’s foot?’ they say, ‘It is the monk’s foot.’ If you ask, ‘Everyone has a condition of birth; what is your condition of birth, Reverend?’ they say, ‘I am from such-and-such a prefecture.’ What sort of words are these? Do not misunderstand. In all one’s activities, they merely take the path of ordinariness to be secure and reliable.

“They are determined to go on in this way, fixed on going on in this way, never daring to shift even one step for fear of falling into a pit. They are always like people born blind: when walking, they cannot cast aside their staff for even an inch. They clutch it tightly and rely on it as they go.”

Chan Master Huitang told students, “Go and sit in the armor of nothing-to-do on Mount Lu!”

Now his descendants and his school are like dead ashes. This is indeed lamentable.

[The Elder’s Marginal Notes]

In studying Chan, one must first receive the guidance of an enlightened teacher. Without such a teacher, even over kalpas and many lifetimes, one cannot suddenly open the true eye. Yet most practitioners today merely increase their learning and do not seek correct awakening. Moreover, the teachers and friends they encounter mostly hold wrong views. How could they avoid falling into pits and becoming adherents of non-Buddhist paths?

Cultivating the Way is difficult in this manner. To be too rigid and sit within the armor of nothing-to-do is certainly wrong; but to be too loose, giving rise to interpretations in response to words, is even more wrong. What, then, is the proper

course? First seek marvelous awakening and see your nature; then, according to your capacity, diligently remove deluded habitual tendencies, until the skin has entirely fallen away and only the one reality is revealed.

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

Chan Master Zhaojue once said that Chan masters of his own lineage, including Zhenjing and Huitang (Huanglong Zuxin), had studied only the Chan of their late master, Huanglong Huinan, and had not attained Huanglong's essential teaching.

Dahui Zonggao, the author of this book, Treasury of the Chan School, commented that Zhaojue took ordinary freedom from affairs as the Way. He established neither views nor intellectual understanding, allowed no conceptual interpretation, sought no further progress, and did not seek marvelous awakening. He condemned as "constructed establishments" the genuine Dharma gate of sudden awakening and seeing one's nature, transmitted in one unbroken lineage by all Buddhas and patriarchs through Deshan, Linji, Caodong, Yunmen, and others.

The Śūraṅgama Sūtra says, "All mountains, rivers, empty space, and the great earth are things within the wondrous, luminous true mind." Zhaojue condemned this as mere words above the diaphragm, saying that this too was a "constructed establishment." He also said that the ancients' discussion of Chan was merely talk of profundity and wondrousness. In attacking the ancients, he slandered the sages of old, blinded later generations, and became one of those with no sinew in the eyes and no blood beneath the skin. Zhaojue's words were so preposterous, yet he himself was complacently unaware. He was truly pitiable.

Chan Master Dahui cited the words of the Sūtra of Perfect Enlightenment: "Sentient beings in the Dharma-ending age aspire to realize the Way, but are not allowed to seek awakening; they merely increase their learning and enlarge their view of self." The sūtra further says: "Although sentient beings in the Dharma-ending age seek good spiritual friends, they encounter those of wrong views and fail to attain correct awakening. This is called the disposition of non-Buddhist paths and the errors of misguided teachers; it is not the fault of sentient beings." Looking at Zhaojue's statements, are they not precisely the "disposition of non-Buddhist paths and the errors of misguided teachers"? The words of the sūtra are not false.

Chan Master Zhenjing said in an informal teaching: "Nowadays, there is a kind of person who clings to 'ordinary mind is the Way' and takes it to be the ultimate truth. In their view, heaven is heaven, earth is earth, mountains are mountains, water is water, monastics are monastics, laypeople are laypeople; a full month has thirty days, and a short month has twenty-nine."

“These are all people who cling to grass and attach themselves to trees, becoming deluded without knowing it. If you ask them, ‘How is my hand like the Buddha’s hand?’ they say, ‘It is the monk’s hand.’ Ask again, ‘How is my foot like a donkey’s foot?’ and they say, ‘It is the monk’s foot.’”

“The third question is: ‘Everyone has a condition of birth; what is your condition of birth, Reverend?’” (These three successive questions are known as the “Three Barriers of Huanglong.”) “They answer, ‘I am from such-and-such a prefecture.’”

“What kind of answer is that? They misunderstand the Chan of the late master Huanglong. They think that in everything one must follow a single path of ordinariness, believing that this is the secure course. They dare not move a single step, fearing that they will fall into a pit. Such people are ordinarily like blind men, unable to leave their walking stick even for a single step. They grip ‘ordinary mind’ tightly and refuse to let it go, as though afraid someone might snatch it away.”

Chan Master Huitang also once told students, “Go and sit in the armor of nothing-to-do on Mount Lu!” The armor of nothing-to-do on Mount Lu refers to Zhaojue’s view.

Dahui then commented: By now, the descendants of Zhaojue’s school are few and scattered, cold as dead ashes. This is sad indeed.

The Elder commented: “In studying Chan, one must first receive the guidance of an enlightened teacher. Without such a teacher, even over kalpas and many lifetimes, one cannot suddenly open the true eye.” Indeed, if one encounters a teacher such as Zhaojue, how could one open the true eye?

The Elder lamented the present age: “Yet most practitioners today merely increase their learning and do not seek correct awakening. Moreover, the teachers and friends they encounter mostly hold wrong views. How could they avoid falling into pits and becoming adherents of non-Buddhist paths?” Today we are far removed in time from the sages; there are many like Zhaojue, but few like Huitang and Zhenjing. If students cannot recognize an enlightened teacher, it would be better for them to uphold a single Buddha-name and seek secure rebirth in the Western Pure Land.

The Elder then taught: “Cultivating the Way is difficult in this manner. To be too rigid and sit within the armor of nothing-to-do is certainly wrong; but to be too loose, giving rise to interpretations in response to words, is even more wrong.”

“What, then, is the proper course? First seek marvelous awakening and see your nature; then, according to your capacity, diligently remove deluded habitual tendencies, until the skin has entirely fallen away and only the one reality is revealed.” Zhaojue was too rigid, sitting within the armor of nothing-to-do; this was certainly wrong. Yet being too loose is likewise unacceptable: to fabricate

interpretations by following the course of words is even more wrong. What, then, is the proper course? The Elder showed us a direct path: first open to one's original nature and see it; after awakening, one must not slacken, but diligently remove the habitual tendencies of deluded attachment, until the skin has entirely fallen away and only the one reality is revealed.

Alas! Zhaojue also "undertook every neglected task at once. There was not a day without formal teachings, informal instruction, or private interviews." He merely obscured the one reality. People today, however, mostly have not yet shed their skin completely.

Thirty-Seven: Buddhist Disciples of the Western Heaven

[Original Text of the Koan]

When the Venerable Fozhao Gao first resided at Guizong, he devoted himself single-mindedly to practice of the Way and was never in the least lax. Late one night, after finishing his devotions, he sat by the floor-hearth in the monks' hall. Suddenly, he saw two monks enter the hall: one had bushy brows and a snow-white head, while the other was young. Both were tall and of fine bearing. Gao was delighted and said to himself, "I have monks of such stature under my guidance."

Before long, the two men left the hall, and Gao followed behind them. He saw them enter the Buddha Hall and followed them in. The lamplight shone brightly, and there was still fire in the brazier. Gao lit incense and bowed to the Buddha.

The two monks left again, and he followed behind them. When they reached the front of the Buddha Hall, he suddenly lost sight of them. He thought to himself, "I left my incense case inside the hall." When he turned back to retrieve it, he found the hall doors locked. He called Shoushun, the attendant in charge of the hall, to open the door. Shoushun fetched the key and opened it. They saw that the incense smoke in the brazier had not yet dispersed, and the incense case was on the altar steps. They could not understand the reason for this.

Miaoxi personally heard Fozhao relate this account. Shoushun was present at the time and was still pointed to as a witness.

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

These were sons of the Buddha from the Western Heaven, who had come to observe the master's practice of the Way.

[Sawing Open the Scale Weight]

Do you all still remember that “Huashan’s eighteen prefectures”? Before Chan Master Fozhao Gao became abbot of the Fayun practice center, he first served as abbot of the Guizong practice center. He cultivated diligently and was never in the least lax. One day, after practicing late into the night, he went to warm himself by the floor-hearth in the monks’ hall. Suddenly, he saw two monks, one old and one young, enter the hall. Their deportment was most impressive. Fozhao Gao was delighted to see them and assumed that they were monks from his own monastery. “How can there be monks of such fine bearing!” he thought.

The two monks left the monks’ hall, and Fozhao followed them out, wishing to see clearly who they were. The two monks entered the Buddha Hall, and Fozhao followed them in. The hall was brilliantly illuminated, and incense was burning in the censer. Fozhao took out the incense case he carried with him, added a stick of incense to the censer, and reverently bowed to the Buddha.

The two monks left the Buddha Hall, and Fozhao immediately followed them out, but could not find them. He suddenly remembered that he had left his incense case in the hall, so he turned back to retrieve it. Yet he found that the Buddha Hall was locked—after all, it was already late at night, so how could it not have been locked? He roused Master Shoushun, the incense-lamp attendant responsible for the Buddha Hall, and had him open its doors with the key. They saw that the stick of incense was still burning in the censer, and that the incense case had also been left there. Chan Master Gao and Master Shoushun questioned one another, but neither knew what had just happened.

Miaoxi was the self-designation of Chan Master Dahui Zonggao. He personally heard Chan Master Fozhao recount this event. When Master Gao told the story, Master Shoushun was also present, confirming that the matter was absolutely true.

Who, after all, were those two monks? They were able to enter and leave a locked Buddha Hall freely, both themselves and anyone following them. The Elder said, “These were sons of the Buddha from the Western Heaven, who had come to observe the master’s practice of the Way.” It turns out that Chan Master Fozhao had karmic affinities from former lives with these two miraculous monks. Speaking of this, let me offer you all a word of encouragement: do not always hope that you, too, will encounter such things. Such events may be encountered, but cannot be sought.

38. Hereditary Houses of the Chancellors

[Original Koan Text]

Grand Chancellor Lü Mengzheng was from Luoyang. In his humble early years, his livelihood was bleak and unsettled. During a month of heavy snow, he appealed everywhere to the wealthy and powerful, but few came to his aid. He wrote a poem, roughly as follows: “Of ten visits to vermilion gates, nine do not open; covered in wind and snow, I return once more. Entering the door, I am too ashamed to look upon my wife and children; all night I poke through the ashes of the cold hearth.” One can well imagine it.

On the road he happened to meet a monk, who took pity on his poverty and distress, invited him back to the monastery, and provided him with food and clothing. The monk gave him some money and sent him on his way. Barely a month later, Lü had exhausted everything and again came to see the monk. The monk said, “This is no long-term plan. You may move your family into rooms in the monastery. At mealtimes, you can receive porridge and food with the community. In this way, you may perhaps manage for the long term.” Lü did as he said. No longer troubled by food and clothing, he applied himself wholeheartedly to study. That year he took the examinations and received a provincial recommendation. The monk bought him a horse, hired a servant, prepared clothing and traveling expenses, and sent him to the capital. He was selected in the metropolitan examination, and in the palace examination his name was announced as the top candidate. When he first served as vice prefect of the Western Capital, he met the monk just as he had before.

Ten years later, he became a chief minister. Whenever the suburban sacrificial rites were held, the accompanying stipends were all deposited and left unclaimed. One day Emperor Taizong asked, “You have attended the suburban rites many times, yet have not requested the stipends. Why is this?” He replied, “Your servant has a private debt of gratitude that he has not yet repaid.” The emperor questioned him further, and he told him the truth. The emperor sighed, “There is such a person among the monks!” He ordered the monk’s name to be submitted in a memorial, bestowed upon him a purple robe and an honorary title, and thereby distinguished him.

Lü calculated that the accumulated stipends amounted to several tens of thousands of strings of cash. He sent an official dispatch to the Western Capital, instructing the monk to draw the money for repairing and expanding the monastery and supporting its monastic community. The monastery had originally been the birthplace of the two sages, Emperor Taizu and Emperor Taizong, when it was the Iron Horse Camp. A monastery had already been established there during Taizu’s reign, but its name has been forgotten. The monk was the abbot of that monastery. Taizong separately granted funds to rebuild the main gate, bestowed an imperial inscription for its plaque, and authorized the ordination of monks.

Every morning, Lord Lü rose early to bow before the Buddha and prayed: “May anyone who does not believe in the Three Jewels not be born into my family. May my descendants in every generation receive emoluments at court and protect the Buddhadharma from without.” His nephew Yijian, Duke of Shen, after paying respects at the family shrine each New Year’s Day, would burn incense and send a letter to Chan Master Guanghui Lian, showing him great reverence. The son of Duke Shen, Gongzhu, who was also enfeoffed as Duke of Shen, sent a letter to Venerable Tianyi Huai each New Year’s Day. Haowen, Right Vice Minister, sent a letter to Chan Master Yuanzhao each New Year’s Day. Yongzhong, the son of the Right Vice Minister, sent a letter to Chan Master Fozhao Gao each New Year’s Day. Such was the sincerity, faith, and profound reverence for the Buddha passed down through that family.

Therefore, this account is recorded to admonish future generations.

[Sawing Open the Scale Weight]

Lü Mengzheng was a famous chancellor in history, but during the first half of his life he was extremely poor—he could not even afford food. Had he not encountered a monk who aided him, how could he have concerned himself with studying and taking the examinations?

After becoming chancellor, he met the monk again and behaved just as he had before, without the slightest air of a chancellor.

Whenever the suburban sacrificial rites were held, everyone received an additional allowance, and the chancellor’s allowance was even greater. Lü Mengzheng did not collect his, and so it accumulated until it finally drew the emperor’s attention.

Emperor Taizong of the Song, Zhao Guangyi, asked him, “Why have you not collected the stipends for the suburban rites?” In fact, Lü had been waiting for just this question. He immediately replied, “I once received another’s kindness, which I have not yet repaid.” This aroused Taizong’s curiosity, and Lü Mengzheng took the opportunity to recount truthfully what had happened in those earlier years.

This moved the emperor, who bestowed a purple robe on the monk and conferred upon him an honorary title. The emperor funded the rebuilding of the monastery’s main gate and personally inscribed its plaque, which was hung above the mountain gate. Once this had been accomplished, the accumulated money could be drawn—there were several tens of thousands of strings of cash. Lü Mengzheng donated the money to the monk for rebuilding the monastery, which then became quite splendid.

The author of this book, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, lived in the Southern Song dynasty, whereas Lü Mengzheng was a chancellor of the Northern Song. Because so much time had passed and territorial boundaries had changed, with the north having become Jin territory, neither the monastery's name nor the monk's name can be verified. This account was preserved because Lü's descendants, a family of chancellors, honored the Buddha generation after generation.

While Lü Mengzheng was alive, he prayed before the Buddha every morning: "May anyone who does not believe in the Three Jewels not be born into my family. May my descendants in every generation receive emoluments at court and protect the Buddhadharma from without." Among his descendants, Yijian supported Chan Master Guanghui Lian; Gongzhu supported Venerable Tianyi Huai; Haowen supported Chan Master Yuanzhao; and Yongzhong supported Chan Master Fayun Fozhao Gao, who had conquered "eighteen prefectures of Mount Hua".... In the Lü family, the custom of honoring the Buddha was passed down from generation to generation.

When Chan Master Dahui learned of this matter, he included it in Armory of the Chan School to encourage later generations.

[The following content is from a forum]

Kindness received must be repaid! Zhiyue 12:23:23 6/08/02 (no content)

A few thoughts, Shancai 12:15:42 6/08/02 (237)

Ordinary mind is the Way; a straightforward mind is the place of practice. lvm 12:18:18 6/08/02 (48)

Excellent! I bow in reverence... Shancai 12:21:09 6/08/02 (no content)

Thirty-Nine: Blue Here, Congealed There

[Original Koan]

Chan Masters Chu Qing and Chu Ning, the two foremost disciples of Chan Master Baoning Yong, studied together under Chan Master Baiyun Duan. Ning had served longest in the attendants' quarters. Duan suffered from a disorder of the diaphragm, and Ning often simmered radishes in preparation for times of need. Duan composed the "Verse on the Circumstances of Layman Fu's Expounding the Sutra": "When had the Great Being ever known how to expound a sutra? Zhigong, using skillful means, helped complete the occasion. With one sweep across the table, nothing at all was grasped; this brought King Liang's eyes to glare." He presented it to Ning and said, "What is it that glares?" This single remark was merely

old-woman Chan spoken for Ning's benefit. Ning took it as a personal transmission and therefore appended it beneath the verse. Later, he resided at Mount Tianzhu in Shuzhou.

Qing resided at Taiping in Longshu and possessed great capacity and eloquence; even Master Wuzu Yan held him in awe and respect. Qing said to Ning, "My younger brother's Chan was obtained by simmering radishes for the old master."

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Masters Chu Qing and Chu Ning were the two foremost disciples under Chan Master Baoning Yong. The two of them later studied together under Chan Master Baiyun Duan. Chu Ning served as an attendant for quite some time. He often prepared a Chinese medicinal remedy—radish—to treat Chan Master Baiyun Duan's disorder of the diaphragm.

Chan Master Duan composed a "Verse on the Circumstances of Layman Fu's Expounding the Sutra": "When had the Great Being ever known how to expound a sutra? Zhigong, using skillful means, helped complete the occasion. With one sweep across the table, nothing at all was grasped; this brought King Liang's eyes to glare." What were the circumstances of Layman Fu's expounding the sutra? Please see the Record of the Lamp:

Emperor Wu of Liang invited Layman Fu to expound the Diamond Sūtra. As soon as the layman ascended the seat, he struck the table once with a ruler and then stepped down. The emperor was astonished. The holy master, Chan Master Zhigong, said, "Does Your Majesty understand?" The emperor replied, "I do not." The holy master said, "The Great Being has finished expounding the sutra."

In the line from the "Verse on the Circumstances of Layman Fu's Expounding the Sutra," "With one sweep across the table, nothing at all was grasped," this single sweep completed the exposition of the Diamond Sūtra. It signified "nothing at all is grasped": neither worldly dharmas nor Buddhadharma is grasped at. In this way, the meaning of the Diamond Sūtra was laid out in its entirety.

Emperor Wu of Liang was well versed in Buddhist doctrine and had personally ascended the seat to expound the Radiance Prajñā Sūtra. Yet theoretical understanding does not necessarily find expression in actual practice. Seeing that Layman Fu did not utter a single word, he was greatly astonished—"this brought King Liang's eyes to glare." He even thought that Layman Fu did not know how to expound a sutra—"When had the Great Being ever known how to expound a sutra?" The Great Being compassionately sought to guide him, but the emperor could not comprehend. It was an awkward situation, so Chan Master Zhigong stepped forward

to smooth matters over—"Zhigong, using skillful means, helped complete the occasion."

Chan Master Baiyun Duan showed this "Verse on the Circumstances of Layman Fu's Expounding the Sutra" to Attendant Ning and offered this prompt: "What is it that glares?" Attendant Ning could understand it: what glared was, of course, the eyes—namely, vajra eyes.

Not only Attendant Ning, but even a beginner could understand this prompt. Therefore Chan Master Dahui said, "This single remark was merely old-woman Chan spoken for Ning's benefit." It was like an old grandmother chattering to a child: if one spoke too profoundly, the child would not understand. Yet Attendant Ning regarded this prompt as Chan Master Duan's personal transmission, copied the words "What is it that glares?" beneath the "Verse on the Circumstances of Layman Fu's Expounding the Sutra," and treasured them.

Later, Chu Qing became abbot of Taiping Chan Monastery in Longshu, while Chu Ning became abbot of a Chan monastery on Mount Tianzhu in Shuzhou. Every phrase of Chu Qing's Chan flowed from his own mind, and he possessed great capacity and eloquence; even Master Wuzu Yan, Chan Master Duan's Dharma heir, respected and held him in awe. Chu Ning's Chan, however, was far inferior to Chu Qing's. No wonder Chu Qing assessed him thus: "My younger brother's Chan was obtained by simmering radishes for the old master"—it was not realized by himself.

Borrowing another's words can never bring genuine benefit. One must awaken and realize for oneself.

Forty: The Right Time and Conditions

[Original Text of the Koan]

During the Zhenghe era, there was a xiucai named Xiong, a native of Poyang. While traveling in West Mountain of Hongzhou, he passed Cuiyan. The abbot, Siwen, was a Dharma heir of Chan Master Foyin Yuan and was likewise a native of Poyang. He sent two attendants with a sedan chair to carry Xiong to Jingxiang. The forested ravines along the way were dark and shaded. By chance, Xiong saw a monk whose appearance was ancient and whose spirit was clear; his bushy brows and snow-white head, his garment woven of leaves, and his seat upon a broad rock made him resemble the monk Fotudeng depicted in a mural.

Xiong said to himself, "There are no monks like this nowadays." He had once heard that Lecturer Liang had withdrawn into seclusion in West Mountain, and he wondered whether he might still be there. He stepped out of the sedan chair and

respectfully approached, asking, “Could you be Lecturer Liang?” The monk pointed eastward. As Xiong and the two bearers looked in that direction, he turned back and found that the monk had vanished. The light rain had just stopped. Xiong himself climbed onto the rock and saw that the place where the monk had sat was still dry. Looking about hesitantly in all directions, he sighed deeply: “My karmic affinity from past lives is not strong enough; though I encountered him, it was as though I had not.”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

Some may fault Elder Liang for seeking liberation only for himself and not liberating sentient beings. They do not realize that liberating sentient beings must also accord with the proper time and conditions; it cannot be forced. Those like Elder Liang are truly rarely seen in the monastic community. He was indeed an outstanding person!

[Sawing Open a Steelyard Weight]

Chan Master Siwen of Jingxiang was a native of Poyang and a Dharma heir of Chan Master Foyin Liaoyuan of Yunju in the Yunmen school (Yunmen Wenyan Shuangquan Yu　Deshan Huiyuan　Kaixian Shanxian　Yunju Liaoyuan). A fellow townsman of his, the xiucai Xiong, was coming to pay him a visit. The mountain road was difficult to travel and unsuitable for a scholarly man such as Xiong. Chan Master Siwen therefore asked two men to carry him over in a sedan chair.

The mountain road wound up and down, with dense woods on both sides, and it was still raining lightly. As the sedan chair passed through dark ravines, Xiong suddenly saw a monk seated on a large boulder. His appearance was ancient and his spirit clear; his bushy brows, snow-white head, and garment woven of leaves made him look very much like the monk Fotudeng in a mural. Xiong had read Records of the Lamp and knew that Lecturer Liang, a disciple of Mazu, had withdrawn into seclusion in West Mountain of Hongzhou:

Lecturer Liang was from Shu and was quite learned in the sūtras and treatises. When he visited Mazu, Mazu asked, “I hear that you are a great lecturer on the sūtras and treatises. Is that so?” The master replied, “I would not dare say so.” Mazu asked, “What do you use to lecture?” The master replied, “I use the mind.”

Mazu said, “The mind is like an artisan, and consciousness is like one who harmonizes with the artisan. How can it lecture?” The master protested loudly, “If the mind cannot lecture, can empty space lecture?” Mazu said, “It is precisely empty space that can lecture.” The master would not accept this and left. As he was about to descend the steps, Mazu called out, “Lecturer!” The master turned his head. Mazu asked, “What is it?” The master suddenly attained great awakening and bowed.

Mazu said, “What is this dull-rooted monk bowing for?” The master replied, “I had thought that no one could equal the sūtras and treatises I lecture upon. Today, when the great master questioned me, the accomplishments of my entire life melted away like ice.” He bowed in thanks and withdrew. He then secluded himself in West Mountain of Hongzhou, and there was no further news of him.

Xiong thought, “This is no ordinary monk of the present day; monks nowadays do not possess such bearing. Could this monk be Lecturer Liang?” Xiong lived in the Southern Song dynasty, whereas Lecturer Liang lived in the Tang dynasty; they were separated by a great many years.

Xiong stepped down from the sedan chair and respectfully went forward to ask, “Are you Lecturer Liang?” The miraculous monk pointed eastward. Xiong and the two men carrying the sedan chair all looked eastward, but saw nothing. When they turned back, the boulder was already empty.

The light rain had just stopped. Xiong climbed onto the boulder and saw that the place where the miraculous monk had just been sitting was dry, while all the other places were wet. This showed that someone had indeed sat there; it was not merely that he had been seeing things. Besides, all three of them could not have been seeing things at the same time. Xiong sighed, “My karmic affinity from past lives is not strong enough; though I encountered him, it was as though I had not.” Although it was not strong, there was still affinity from past lives. Without such affinity, even seeing him once would have been impossible.

The Elder’s marginal note says: “Some may fault Elder Liang for seeking liberation only for himself and not liberating sentient beings. They do not realize that liberating sentient beings must also accord with the proper time and conditions; it cannot be forced. Those like Elder Liang are truly rarely seen in the monastic community. He was indeed an outstanding person!” Perhaps some would criticize Lecturer Liang as one concerned only with his own liberation, dwelling in deep mountains without coming forth to liberate sentient beings.

They do not understand that liberating sentient beings must also depend on the proper time and conditions; it cannot be forced. If sentient beings’ conditions for liberation have not matured, even Buddhas and bodhisattvas will not appear in the world, for even if they came, people would not heed them. Cultivation such as that of Lecturer Liang is truly rare in the monastic community. He was an exceptional figure, as rare as a phoenix feather or a unicorn horn, outstanding among all others!

Forty-One: Letting Go Brings Stability

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Xian of Kaixian composed an inscription for Chan Master Nan of Guizong's meditation bench: "A bright pearl is produced in an oyster; the cool rabbit carries a fetus. Behold this meditation bench: a means for realizing the Way." Nan then composed an inscription for Guizong: "Let go, and you are at ease." Xian of Kaixian deeply approved of it.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Xian of Kaixian wrote an inscription for Chan Master Nan of Guizong's meditation bench: "A bright pearl is produced in an oyster; the cool rabbit carries a fetus. Behold this meditation bench: a means for realizing the Way." Taking the bright pearl produced in an oyster and the cool rabbit's ability to give birth to jade as metaphors, Xian of Kaixian said that Chan Master Nan's meditation bench was a means for realizing the Way. This was "probing with a pole and casting a shadow in the grass," an attempt to test Chan Master Nan and see whether his heels were firmly planted on the ground. If Nan's reply revealed even the slightest suggestion that there was still a Way to be realized or a means to be obtained, Xian of Kaixian would have seized upon it.

But Chan Master Nan was a great master of broad vision, and of course he would not fall for such a trap. You use an inscription to probe me, so I too shall reply with an inscription. Thus Chan Master Nan composed an inscription for the Guizong Chan monastery where he lived, highlighting the line, "Let go, and you are at ease." If even a place of practice can be let go of, how much more so a meditation bench! Now all was secure. Xian of Kaixian could find nothing to seize upon and could only "deeply approve of it."

The ancient Chan masters lived at a time when Dharma assemblies flourished. Whenever someone came to praise them, they would casually sweep it aside. This is how the phrase "Buddhist works are like dreams and illusions; places of practice are like the moon reflected in water" came about.

Forty-Two: There Is More to Be Said

[Original Koan]

Chan Master Tan of Xingjiao in Xuanzhou was a native of the Niu family of Wenzhou. His family trade was silversmithing. Once, while polishing a silver vase, he suddenly awakened. He then left home, received full ordination, and traveled in search of teachers. He was the Dharma heir of Guangzhao of Langya.

When Chan Master Huai was abbot of Xingjiao, Tan served as head seat. When Huai accepted another appointment and wished to recommend Tan as his successor,

Diao Jingchun, the governor of Wanling, was then in office. Fearing that Diao might be influenced by outside opinions, Huai prayed before Avalokiteśvara: “If Head Seat Tan’s Dharma eye is clear and he is fit to serve as abbot, may Scholar Diao be shown a dream.” That night, Diao dreamed of an ox sitting on the Dharma seat at Xingjiao. At dawn, Huai went to bid farewell to the governor. Diao told him of his dream from the night before. Huai laughed loudly. When Diao asked why, Huai said, “Head Seat Tan’s surname is Niu [Ox], and he was also born in the Year of the Ox.” Diao then took his seat and issued an invitation to him.

When Tan accepted the invitation and ascended the Dharma seat, Shengzong, a fundraising monk from Xuedou, stepped forward and asked, “Before the Buddhas appeared in the world, everyone’s nostrils reached the sky. After they appeared in the world, why is there not the slightest news?” Tan said, “Before Chicken-Foot Peak, the wind is quiet.” Shengzong said, “Not yet. Say more.” Tan said, “Heavy snow fills Chang’an.” Shengzong said, “Who here knows this, making me recall Nanquan?” He flicked his sleeves and returned to the assembly without bowing again. Tan said, “The new Xingjiao has suffered a setback today,” and returned to the abbot’s quarters.

Tan sent someone to invite Shengzong to his quarters and said, “Just now I gave an incorrect response. Before the assembly of humans and devas, why did you not bow and cover it over?” Shengzong said, “There is gold beneath the knees of a great man. How could I bow to an eyeless elder?” Tan said, “I have something else to say.” Shengzong then repeated the earlier exchange. When he came to “Not yet. Say more,” Tan said, “I have thirty blows, entrusted to you for striking Xuedou!” Shengzong then bowed.

[Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight]

Chan Master Tan of Xingjiao was a descendant in the Linji school lineage (Linji Yixuan Xinghua Cunjiang Nanyuan Huiyong Fengxue Yanzhao Shoushan Shenging Fenyang Shanzhao Langya Huijue Xingjiao Tan). His lay surname was Niu. Originally a silversmith from Wenzhou, he was stirred into the affinity for liberation from former lives while tempering and polishing vessels. “He immediately left home, studied under Langya, and their exchange of pivotal words brought sudden accord. Later, he relied on Chan Master Huai of Tianyi …” (Compendium of the Five Lamps).

When Chan Master Tianyi Yihuai of the Yunmen school (Yunmen Wenyan Xianglin Chengyuan Zhimen Guangzuo Xuedou Chongxian Tianyi Yihuai) was abbot of Xingjiao Chan Monastery, Chan Master Tan was the head seat. Later, Master Huai was to become abbot of another Chan monastery and wished to have Master Tan succeed him as abbot of Xingjiao Chan Monastery, because he considered Head Seat Tan’s Dharma eye to be clear.

Master Huai had none of the narrow and inferior prejudices of sectarianism; he valued only clarity of the Dharma eye. At the time, Grand Academician Diao Jingchun was the governor of Wanling and had authority over this matter. Fearing that Scholar Diao would invite someone else, Master Huai prayed to Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva: "If Head Seat Tan's Dharma eye is clear and he is fit to serve as abbot, may Scholar Diao be shown a dream."

The next day, Master Huai went to bid farewell to Governor Diao. Governor Diao said, "Last night I had a dream: I dreamed that an ox was sitting on the Dharma seat of Xingjiao Chan Monastery." Master Huai laughed heartily and told Governor Diao, "Head Seat Tan's surname is Niu [Ox], and he was also born in the Year of the Ox." Governor Diao immediately sat down and wrote an invitation, inviting Chan Master Tan to become abbot of Xingjiao Chan Monastery.

Chan Master Chengxin Shengzong (Zong) was a Dharma brother of Chan Master Tianyi Yihuai and also an heir of Xuedou. When Master Tan succeeded as abbot, he was rather dissatisfied. The Linji school was like lightning and sparks, its pivotal responses swift; the Yunmen school was like fluttering red banners, grand in spirit. Their house styles differed, so it was only natural that Shengzong was dissatisfied.

On the day the new abbot ascended the Dharma seat, Shengzong stepped forward to challenge him: "Before the Buddhas appeared in the world, everyone's nostrils reached the sky. After they appeared in the world, why is there not the slightest news?" This implied: many people could serve as abbot here.

Since you have become abbot, why is there neither lightning and sparks nor fluttering red banners? At such a moment, Chan Master Tan did not wish to argue with him at length, so he replied, "Before Chicken-Foot Peak, the wind is quiet." Kāśyapa guarded Śākyamuni Buddha's Dharma robe and entered samādhi on Chicken-Foot Mountain; naturally, there would be gentle wind and soft rain.

This reminded him: they were all of one Chan lineage, so contention was inappropriate. Why not let "the wind be quiet"? Yet Shengzong would not let the matter go and pressed him further: "Not yet. Say more!" This is not right—say it again! He insisted on seeing the real thing. Chan Master Tan said, "Heavy snow fills Chang'an."

This meant that if they continued to contend in this way, it would be like snow falling from the sky: not only would it chill the guests who had come to offer congratulations, but it would also leave the entire monastery uneasy. Shengzong still remained unconvinced: "Who here knows this, making me recall Nanquan?"

This meant: Why fear disorder? How would outsiders know what happens here? Why are you not as forthright and decisive as Nanquan when he cut the cat? Having said

this, he flicked his sleeves and returned to the assembly, without bowing again. What an awkward situation! Did you not want to see the real thing? That would be easy enough: he could simply strike you, and then you would see where the fault lay. But to strike him at that point would have been like a hawk already past Silla: the staff could no longer come down. Chan Master Tan could only say, “The new Xingjiao has suffered a setback today.” Having said this, he returned to the abbot’s quarters.

After returning to his quarters, Chan Master Tan sent for Shengzong and said to him, “Just now I gave an incorrect response. Before the assembly of humans and devas, why did you not bow and cover it over?” This was still to give priority to harmony, a final attempt at persuasion.

Yet these words concealed a needle in cotton: Where was the error? The error was that I did not strike you! Had Shengzong turned around at this point, all would have been well for both sides. But he still would not yield and instead replied, “There is gold beneath the knees of a great man. How could I bow to an eyeless elder?”

In fact, how could your Dharma brother have misjudged a person? How could he be an eyeless elder? Since this was so, Chan Master Tan ceased to be polite: “I have something else to say.” He was luring him onto the hook.

Shengzong noticed nothing and actually “repeated the earlier exchange.” When he reached “Not yet. Say more,” Chan Master Tan suddenly cut him off: “I have thirty blows, entrusted to you for striking Xuedou!” I had long had thirty blows; by not striking you, I had merely deposited them with you. Now they should be administered to your teacher! I will no longer serve as abbot here—

either we can go reason the matter out before your teacher and see whether he deserves the blows, and how he has taught his disciples. Only then did Shengzong realize the seriousness of the matter. He could not persist in acting willfully, so he immediately bowed to Chan Master Tan.

Thus, a dispute was settled. After the lightning and sparks, here “the wind was quiet.”

[The following content comes from a forum]

Ha ha! This case has appeared at exactly the right time. Lion 17:29:37 6/12/02 (70)

You are mistaken. Bag 18:35:08 6/12/02 (18)

You bag, why not save a little face for others? Lion 21:26:59 6/12/02 (no content)

Ha ha! Yuanzhi 10:41:02 6/30/02 (100)

Who wants face? manman 21:43:52 6/12/02 (no content)

Certainly not you! Lion 22:32:57 6/12/02 (no content)

As though you were about to eat me. manman 23:01:41 6/12/02 (14)

43. Arising and Ceasing Without Pause

[Original Koan]

Chan Master Yuanwu, when he was first at Weishan, was asked one day by Chan Master Zhenru, “How is it?” Yuanwu replied, “Arising and ceasing do not stop.” Zhenru said, “This shows that you are an ordinary worldling. This old monk has spent thirty years here and has attained only something approximate.” Later, when he met Huitang, Huitang said, “For twelve years after I became abbot, I did not understand. Only now do I understand: even the tip of my foot can kick out a Buddha.”

After awakening, Yuanwu resided at Zhaojue. An elder asked about “the dialogue when Liu Tiemo went to Weishan” and “Xuedou’s verse to the tune ‘Yujie Xing,’” saying, “What is the meaning of this?” Yuanwu replied, “Even if this old monk were to continue investigating for another forty years, I still would not reach Xuedou’s level.” The elder sighed, “Even the Chan Master of Zhaojue speaks thus; how much more so the rest of us!”

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Yuanwu was the author of the Blue Cliff Record. When he first studied under Chan Master Zhenru of Weishan, Zhenru once asked him, “You have long been diligently engaged in Chan study; how are you doing now?” Yuanwu replied that deluded thoughts were still ceaselessly arising and ceasing.

At that time, he still took “extinguishing thoughts” to be awakening. Undoubtedly, he was still practicing the discipline of “suppressing thoughts so that they would not arise”—that is, he was still engaged in cultivation. Chan Master Zhenru pointed this out to him: “This shows that you are an ordinary worldling. This old monk has spent thirty years here and has attained only something approximate.”

It was not that “arising and ceasing do not stop” made him an ordinary worldling; rather, one who practices the work of “extinguishing thoughts” is an ordinary worldling. Zhenru told Yuanwu, “I too was once deluded here. For thirty years I practiced using one thought to suppress another, and only attained something resembling the absence of arising thoughts.”

This was a reminder to Yuanwu: he was on the wrong path. At the time, Yuanwu did not understand—it was not suited to his capacity, and they could not fully accord with one another. Yuanwu then went to consult Chan Master Huitang Zuxin of Huanglong. Huitang said, “For twelve years after I became abbot, I did not understand. Only now do I understand: even the tip of my foot can kick out a Buddha.”

“For twelve years I practiced using one thought to suppress another, yet I did not realize that it is complete and present in this very moment. Now I know that, not to mention that ceaseless arising and ceasing is the wondrous functioning of buddha-nature, even moving the tip of one’s foot does not depart from buddha-nature by a single step!” Yuanwu understood at this point, but it cannot be said that he was already utterly purified, nor that he had no remaining doubts. Had he been utterly purified, why would he later have gone to Wuzu Fayan? It was there, upon hearing a rooster crow, that he became utterly purified. He inherited the Dharma lineage of Chan Master Fayan.

Later, Chan Master Yuanwu became abbot of Zhaojue Monastery. An elder cited “the dialogue when Liu Tiemo went to Weishan” and “Xuedou’s verse to the tune ‘Yujie Xing,’” and asked what they meant. This is case twenty-four of Xuedou’s Verses on the Ancient Cases:

[Twenty-Four] The case: Liu Tiemo went to Weishan. Weishan said, “Old cow, you have come.” Tiemo said, “Tomorrow there will be a great vegetarian feast at Mount Tai. Will the Reverend be going?” Weishan lay down, and Tiemo left.

Xuedou’s verse to the tune “Yujie Xing”: Once I rode an iron horse into a heavily fortified city; an edict was issued, and word spread that the six states were at peace. Yet, holding a golden whip, I ask a traveler returning home: Deep in the night, who will ride with me along the imperial avenue?

“Once I rode an iron horse into a heavily fortified city”—Liu Tiemo went to Weishan.

“An edict was issued, and word spread that the six states were at peace”—“Old cow, you have come.”

“Yet, holding a golden whip, I ask a traveler returning home”—“Tomorrow there will be a great vegetarian feast at Mount Tai. Will the Reverend be going?”

“Deep in the night, who will ride with me along the imperial avenue?”—Weishan lay down, and Tiemo left.

The verse and the koan interlock point by point. Chan Master Yuanwu said, “Among the hundred verses, this one has the most coherent rationale. It is supremely

marvelous, expressing the case with close-fitting clarity.” In the Blue Cliff Record, Chan Master Yuanwu explains this encounter with exhaustive detail.

Now an elder came to ask about this, but Yuanwu did not answer with the words from the Blue Cliff Record. Instead, he said, “Even if this old monk were to continue investigating for another forty years, I still would not reach Xuedou’s level.”

If he truly had not reached Xuedou’s level, how could he have explained Xuedou’s verse so exhaustively? Why did he say this? Note the words here: “continue investigating for another forty years”! Investigation means cultivation.

The Way lies in awakening, not in cultivation. This elder did not understand Chan Master Yuanwu’s meaning. He thought that Yuanwu truly did not know, and sighed, “Even the renowned Chan Master of Zhaojue speaks thus; how much more so the rest of us!” He always felt that there must be some further mystery here. If so, then he should honestly “continue investigating for another forty years.”

44. The East Privy Faces West

Original Koan Text

Director Qian Yi visited Chan Master Zhenjing. After they had talked for some time, Qian wished to use the latrine. Zhenjing told an attendant to lead him to the one on the west side. Qian abruptly said, “If it is called the East Office, why are we going west?” Zhenjing said, “How many people seek it to the east!”

The Master said, “Excellent! Even Zhaozhou’s question to Touzi—‘Traveling at night is not permitted; you must arrive in daylight’—is not as good as this saying.”

The Elder’s Marginal Note

“Wonderful! Those called worldly people are all men who generate interpretations from words and cling to appearances. If one awakens from here, would that not be most joyful and exhilarating?”

Sawing Open the Scale Weight

Director Qian Yi was a physician, but he also enjoyed investigating Chan. Once, he went to visit Chan Master Zhenjing. After they had talked for a long time, he wanted to use the toilet (the East Office), but did not know where it was.

Zhenjing told an attendant to lead him to the toilet on the west side. Director Qian Yi suddenly said, “If it is called the East Office, why are we going west?” Ah! This carries something of the meaning that one who has undergone the great death comes alive. Chan Master Zhenjing immediately replied, “How many people seek it to the east!”

Chan lies originally in what is plain and ordinary, yet so many people seek it in the marvelous and mysterious. It is like the “East Office” in this temple: it is actually on the west side, yet so many people cling to the two words “East Office” and look for it to the east.

Chan Master Dahui praised the reply, “How many people seek it to the east!”: “Chan Master Zhenjing truly was formidable! Even Touzi’s saying, ‘Traveling at night is not permitted; you must arrive in daylight,’ is not as good as this one.”

The Elder likewise praised the saying, “How many people seek it to the east!”: “Wonderful! Those called worldly people are all men who generate interpretations from words and cling to appearances. If one awakens from here, would that not be most joyful and exhilarating?” Why do they seek it to the east? Because worldly people falsely generate interpretations on the basis of the words “East Office” and cling to the appearance of the character east in “East Office.” Now that Chan Master Zhenjing has exposed this, their deluded attachment is immediately shattered. If they awaken from here, would they not be most fortunate and delighted?

The Following Content Is from a Forum

The teacher has taken such great pains; the student admires you deeply! Deeply admires you!! gszy 20:45:47 6/26/02 (no content)

I have spoken carelessly; please offer your criticisms and suggestions. lvm 21:20:04 6/26/02 (no content)

I would not dare offer criticism; let me speak nonsense for a moment... gszy 22:09:08 6/26/02 (45)

Forty-Five: Dharma Combat of a Chan Master

[Original Text of the Koan]

The Chan masters of the various mountains in Nankang had gathered together, and Foyin arrived later. Zhenjing asked, “Why has Yunju arrived so late?” Foyin replied, “Because I was wearing straw sandals as I passed through Guizong’s belly, I was delayed.” Zhenjing said, “Then Guizong has swallowed you.” Foyin said, “What can be done? He cannot spit me out.” Zhenjing said, “If he cannot spit you out, then he should shit you out.”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

A Dharma contest between masters—truly a fine sight! Yet Foyin was ultimately a notch inferior.

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

The senior monks of the various mountains in Nankang knew one another. Each was empty, luminous, and free, and they were all old acquaintances. When they met, their exchanges were a natural expression of a mind free of attachment. It was like drawing pictures on water, leaving no trace. This is called a “Dharma contest.” It is nothing like the quarrels of people today: before they even open their mouths, discriminating thoughts and anger have already arisen. That is not a Dharma contest, but the present manifestation of afflictions. Look at these two elders: although their words are like spears and swords, where is there even the slightest trace of affliction?

Chan Master Foyin Liaoyuan of Yunju Mountain was a master of the Yunmen school, whereas Chan Master Zhenjing Kewen of Guizong at Baofeng belonged to the Huanglong branch of the Linji school. Their house styles were naturally different. The Linji school’s Chan repartee is swift and incisive. On the surface, the question, “Why has Yunju arrived so late?” says that Chan Master Foyin arrived late; in fact, it is an indirect suggestion that his Chan repartee was not swift enough.

The Yunmen school has a grand and expansive spirit, as can be seen from the words, “I was wearing straw sandals as I passed through Guizong’s belly”—I had long since seen through that little bit of stuff in your belly! Yet the ending, “I was delayed,” was not very good. Without that ending, even if he had “worn straw sandals as he passed through Guizong’s belly,” it would not necessarily mean that he had “been swallowed by Guizong.”

Seizing upon this ending, Zhenjing immediately swallowed Foyin in a single gulp. But Foyin was no simpleton either. Turning the thrust of his words, he said, “What can be done? He cannot spit me out.” To be able to swallow and to spit out is an allusion to being able both to stand atop the highest mountain and to walk upon the depths of the ocean. Now you can swallow but cannot spit out—you cannot walk upon the depths of the ocean—so you have already lost half the contest! This in turn trapped Zhenjing. But Chan Master Zhenjing knew how to turn about; how could he be trapped? With the single sentence, “If he cannot spit you out, then he should shit you out,” he laid out in full the meaning of “walking upon the depths of the ocean,” cleanly and decisively.

The Elder praised them, saying, “A Dharma contest between masters—truly a fine sight!” Both men were masters; their back-and-forth exchange was a delight to behold. Yet “Foyin was ultimately a notch inferior.” By now, everyone knows in what respect he was a notch inferior, do they not?

Do not misunderstand! This does not mean that the Yunmen school was a notch inferior to the Linji school, nor that Foyin’s realization was inferior to Zhenjing’s. It

means only that, in this particular Dharma contest, Foyin was a notch inferior.

Forty-Six: Great Kindness Is Hard to Repay

[Original Text of the Koan]

At times, Venerable Zhenjing would abruptly call to his attendant, “Bring the old master here.” The attendant would unroll the portrait of Chan Master Nan. Zhenjing would place his hand on his forehead and say, “Were it not for this old master, how could I be as I am?” He would then furrow his brow for a long while before instructing the attendant to put it away. He did this again and again.

Whenever Venerable Qian’an Yuan saw the portrait of Chan Master Nan, tears would fall.

Whenever the master received seasonal fresh fruit, he would first make offerings to the Buddha and to Yuanwu, and only then would he dare taste it. He said to those around him, “Without the Buddha and the old master, how could I be as I am?”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

How profound! The grace of the Buddha and the master is exceedingly difficult to repay!

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

This koan presents three examples of those who did not forget their masters’ kindness. “The portrait of Chan Master Nan” refers to a portrait of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan. At that time there were no cameras; portraits depended entirely on artists’ techniques of realistic depiction. Venerable Zhenjing and Venerable Qian’an Yuan were both disciples of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan.

Venerable Zhenjing instructed his attendant, “Go and bring the old master here.” The attendant then unfolded the portrait of Chan Master Nan for him to see.

Facing the portrait, Zhenjing patted his forehead and sighed for a long while: “If I had not encountered this old master in this life, how could I be as I am? (Had I not met the old master, this life would have passed in vain.)” He then instructed the attendant to store the portrait carefully. Zhenjing often did this. Now listen to these words: “Bring the old master here.”

Such a manner of speaking sounds quite improper—is that respect for one’s master? You must understand that respect lies in the heart, not in one’s words. Nowadays there are also those who imitate Dongshi’s frown or copy the gait learned at Handan. They too seek to imitate the ancients in rebuking the Buddha and

reviling the patriarchs, yet their minds are wild and confused. Even when the ancients said, “Beat him to death and feed him to the dogs,” not a trace of disorder arose in their minds, and their reverence remained wholly unaffected. Let me ask people today: when you imitate Dongshi’s frown, does your reverence still remain? When you copy the gait learned at Handan, is your mind still free of confusion? If so, I permit you to pass judgment. If not, a day will come when you must swallow iron pellets!

Whenever Venerable Qian’an Yuan saw the portrait of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan, he would weep. It is not easy to awaken to one’s original nature!

Each year, whenever Chan Master Dahui Zonggao received fresh fruit, he would first make offerings to the Buddha and to his master, Chan Master Yuanwu Keqin, before daring to eat any himself.

The Elder praised them: “How profound! The grace of the Buddha and the master is exceedingly difficult to repay!” The kindness of one’s parents nurtures one’s life for several decades; yet the grace of the Buddha and the master inspires the wisdom-life of the Dharma body, enabling one to break through deluded attachments and transcend the world. The grace of the Buddha and the master is so vast, boundless beyond all bounds—how could it ever be repaid?

Even if this body were ground into motes of dust, it would still be difficult to repay even one ten-thousandth of the grace of the Buddha and the master!

Forty-Seven: The Supreme Way Is Not Difficult

[Original Koan Text]

Commandant Li Hewen asked Chan Master Langya Jue to annotate the Inscription on Faith in Mind.

Langya wrote one line in large characters, followed below by one line in small characters.

Upon seeing it, Li Hewen expressed great admiration.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

In the literary format of the ancients, the large characters are the original text, and the small characters are the annotations. Commandant Li Hewen asked Chan Master Langya Jue to write an annotation to Master Sengcan’s Inscription on Faith in Mind. Yet Langya Jue used the later lines of the Inscription on Faith in Mind to annotate the earlier ones. Ha ha! That certainly saves trouble. But when Li Hewen

saw it, he was greatly impressed. Is it really so good? Let us take a look: [the annotations are in square brackets]

The Supreme Way is not difficult; it only shuns choosing and rejecting. [Simply do not hate or love, and it will be clear and open of itself.]

A difference of a hair's breadth sets heaven and earth apart. [If you wish it to appear before you, harbor neither conformity nor opposition.]

Struggling between opposition and conformity is a disease of the mind. [Not knowing the profound principle, one vainly labors to quiet one's thoughts.]

Perfectly equal to vast empty space, it lacks nothing and has nothing in excess. [It is precisely because of grasping and rejecting that it is not thus.]

Do not pursue conditioned things; do not abide in an experience of emptiness. [With one equanimous mind, they naturally vanish altogether.]

Stopping movement in order to return to stillness only makes the stopping still more active. [If you remain stuck at the two extremes, how can you know the One?]

If the One is not understood, both sides lose their efficacy. [To reject being is to fall into being; to follow emptiness is to turn one's back on emptiness.]

The more one speaks and thinks, the further one departs from accord. [When speech and thought are cut off, nowhere is inaccessible.]

Returning to the root, one gains the essential meaning; following appearances, one loses the principle. [In a moment of turning the light inward, one surpasses the preceding emptiness.]

The transformations of the preceding emptiness all arise from deluded views. [Do not seek the true; only cease holding views.]

Do not abide in the two views; take care not to pursue them. [As soon as right and wrong arise, the mind is scattered and lost.]

The two arise from the One, yet do not cling even to the One. [When not a single thought arises, the myriad dharmas are without fault.]

Without fault, there is no dharma; without arising, there is no mind. [The subject exists because of the object; the object subsides with the subject.]

The object exists because of the subject; the subject exists because of the object. [To know these two sides, realize that they are originally one emptiness.]

The one emptiness is the same in both, and equally encompasses all appearances. [Without seeing fine or coarse, how could there be any partiality?]

The essence of the Great Way is broad: neither easy nor difficult. [Petty views give rise to doubt and hesitation, making one ever more hurried or delayed.]

Clinging to it loses the proper measure and will certainly lead into a wrong path. [Let it be natural, and its essence neither comes nor abides.]

Letting one's nature accord with the Way, one roams freely beyond affliction. [Binding the mind to thoughts departs from truth and leads to dullness and heaviness.]

It is not good to weary the spirit; why make distinctions of distant and near? [If you wish to take up the One Vehicle, do not despise the six sense objects.]

When the six sense objects are not despised, one is again the same as perfect awakening. [The wise practice non-contrivance; the foolish bind themselves.]

Dharmas have no differing dharmas; deluded people form attachments of their own. [Using mind to employ mind—is this not a great error?]

Delusion gives rise to stillness and disturbance; awakening has neither liking nor aversion. [All dualities arise from discrimination.]

Dreams, illusions, flowers in empty space—why labor to grasp them? [Gain and loss, right and wrong: let them all go at once.]

If the eye does not sleep, all dreams naturally cease. [If the mind is not divided, the myriad dharmas are one suchness.]

The essence of one suchness is profound; motionless, it forgets all conditions. [Viewing the myriad dharmas equally, one returns to what is natural.]

When the reasons for them are extinguished, they cannot be compared or measured. [When stopping and moving are without movement, moving and stopping are without stopping.]

When the two cannot be established, how could the One exist? [At the ultimate limit, no rules or standards remain.]

When one accords with the mind's equality, all activity ceases. [Doubt and hesitation are completely purified, and right faith is aligned and straight.]

Nothing at all remains, and there is nothing to remember. [Empty and luminous, it shines of itself, requiring no effort of mind.]

It is beyond the realm of thought, beyond the measure of discriminating consciousness. [In the dharma realm of suchness, there is neither other nor self. To accord with it directly, simply speak of nonduality.]

In nonduality, all are the same; nothing is not included. [The wise ones of the ten directions all enter this principle.]

This principle is beyond extension or contraction; one thought is ten thousand years. [There is nowhere it is not; the ten directions are before one's eyes.]

The utmost small is the same as the great, for the boundaries are forgotten. [The utmost great is the same as the small, for no limits can be seen.]

Being is precisely nonbeing; nonbeing is precisely being. [If it is not thus, there is no need to preserve it.]

One is all; all is one. [If one can simply be thus, why worry that nothing will be complete?]

Faith in Mind is nondual; nonduality is Faith in Mind. [The path of words is cut off; it is neither past, present, nor future.]

Forty-Eight: Embracing This Teaching Henceforth

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day, Old Master Shun asked Xiuyuantong, "I have heard that you met Master Huai. Is that so?"

Xiu said, "Yes."

Shun said, "What words did he speak?"

Xiu said, "There is a 'Verse on Casting the Shuttle': 'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven; before a ten-thousand-fathom peak, one foot stands alone. Seizing the pearl beneath the black dragon's chin, with one word he sees through Vimalakīrti.'"

Shun said, "Not good. Did he say anything else?"

Xiu said, "One day, an elder monk came to call on him. Huai raised his whisk and said, 'Do you understand?' The elder monk said, 'I do not understand.' Huai said, 'Two flaps of skin for ears; a set of bones for teeth.'"

Shun sighed and said, "A true good spiritual friend!"

From then on, he took it to heart.

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

Refer to “V. Extraordinary Skill”; this case may be regarded as its sequel.

Look at the “Verse on Casting the Shuttle.” It has all the flavor of “Mulan Weaving at Her Door”:

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—click-clack, click-clack, weaving and weaving…

Before a ten-thousand-fathom peak, one foot stands alone—if you have seen how a weaver works at an old wooden loom, you will know how subtle and lifelike this line is.

Seizing the pearl beneath the black dragon’s chin—when weaving, one repeatedly and skillfully throws and catches the shuttle. How much this line resembles the motion of catching the shuttle!

With a single word, Vimalakīrti is seen through—after grasping the shuttle, there comes a “clang!” The characters ji ( ) and jie ( ), moreover, are homophones.

Of course, the Chan master used weaving—the casting of the shuttle—as his subject for a verse expressing Chan meaning:

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—investigating and investigating…

Before a ten-thousand-fathom peak, one foot stands alone—place the mind in one spot, and nothing will remain undone.

Seizing the pearl beneath the black dragon’s chin—in an instant, one suddenly breaks through in inquiry!

With one word he sees through Vimalakīrti—ha ha! So that is how it is!

Let us discuss only two questions:

1. Why is the “Verse on Casting the Shuttle” not good, while “Two flaps of skin for ears; a set of bones for teeth” is good?

Actually, it is quite simple. Does not the “Verse on Casting the Shuttle” still bear traces of “Dharma”? Yet “Two flaps of skin for ears; a set of bones for teeth” is so plain and unadorned that no trace of awakening remains; it is simply the scenery of one’s original ground.

2. In the final four characters, “from then on, he took it to heart,” was Xiuyuantong taking Old Master Shun to heart, or was Old Master Shun taking Master Huai to heart?

Let everyone discuss this.

[The Following Content Comes from the Forum]

“From then on, he took it to heart” should not be viewed only through “two flaps of skin for ears.” Maitreya’s tower has layer upon layer without end. Chan Di Yi 21:51:39 6/30/02 (no content)

Who is taking whom to heart? Ha ha! Big Rat 08:43:13 6/30/02 (no content)

Do you take Old Cat to heart or not? ^o^ lvm 10:22:21 6/30/02 (no content)

Old Cat walks without a sound; the rat crunches grain. Big Rat 18:54:09 6/30/02 (38)

Ha! Do you think Old Cat takes you to heart or not? xlsh 11:24:52 6/30/02 (3)

Though I am not Big Rat, I also take Old Cat to heart. lvm 14:18:57 6/30/02 (no content)

xlsh, I take everyone to heart! xlsh 18:33:06 6/30/02 (36)

Hee hee! Truly ignorant and ill-informed. Little Mouse 10:32:11 6/30/02 (44)

Ha ha! Rats nowadays are no longer afraid of cats. lvm 14:20:02 6/30/02 (no content)

How can someone else have taken this name too? xlsh 11:05:00 6/30/02 (no content)

No taking, no taking! You are from the city, while I am from the countryside. We are like brothers! Little Mouse 15:04:55 6/30/02 (no content)

Please give me much guidance, elder brother. xlsh 18:25:49 6/30/02 (34)

Forty-Nine: Words of True Purity

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Huangbo Quan of Junzhou initially studied the Treatise on the Hundred Dharmas and gained renown as a lecturer. Later, he changed robes and traveled south in search of instruction, meeting Venerable Zhenjing at Dongshan. He composed a Verse on Awakening to the Way, which in part reads: “… With one hammer blow, I pierced through the inexhaustible treasury; all its precious treasures are mine. …” His Chan responses issued forth with swift brilliance, and none could match him. Zhenjing once sighed, “Alas! He will pass before me and have no time to reveal himself.”

Later, while expounding the Dharma from the teaching seat, he passed into extinction without rising from it.

Zhenjing's words were thereby further confirmed.

[Sawing Open the Scale Weight]

Chan Master Quan of Huangbo in Junzhou had originally been a learned lecturer in the doctrinal school, expounding the Treatise on the Gateway to the Hundred Dharmas, and he was highly esteemed. Later, he went to Dongshan to study Chan under Venerable Zhenjing. After breaking through in Chan practice, Master Quan wrote a Verse on Awakening to the Way, including these two lines: "With one hammer blow, I pierced through the inexhaustible treasury; all its precious treasures are mine." Thereafter, his Chan responses issued forth with swift brilliance and were irresistible.

His teacher, Chan Master Zhenjing, once lamented: "What a pity! He will pass away before I do and will not have time to distinguish himself." In ancient usage, the characters and were interchangeable; buji jian ( ) thus means "not having time to appear."

Thereafter, Chan Master Quan entered parinirvāṇa from the Dharma seat while expounding the Dharma. This was indeed regrettable; nevertheless, it confirmed Zhenjing's words.

50. The Turning Words of the Three Buddhas

[Original Text of the Koan]

During the time of Wuzu, the three Buddhas were once talking late at night in a pavilion. When they returned to the abbot's quarters, the lamp had already gone out.

In the darkness, Wuzu said, "Each of you, offer a turning word."

Fojian replied, "A multicolored phoenix dances in the crimson sky."

Foyan said, "An iron serpent lies across the ancient road."

Foguo said, "Watch your step."

Wuzu said, "The one who will bring my school to an end is Keqin."

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

The “three Buddhas” were Fojian Huiqin of Taiping, Foyan Qingyuan of Longmen, and Foguo Yuanwu Keqin, the three most outstanding Dharma heirs under Wuzu Fayan. “Twenty-Seven, Three Twists and Turns” records each of their processes of awakening; this koan may be regarded as its sequel.

One evening, master and disciples—the four of them—talked at length in a pavilion. Late at night, the three disciples escorted their master back to his quarters, where the lamp had already gone out. Standing in the darkness, the master suddenly asked the three disciples to speak a phrase each. He was testing them, listening to each one’s intention and seeing how each had penetrated through circumstances.

Fojian said, “A multicolored phoenix dances in the crimson sky.” That is: “Master, come out quickly and look! A multicolored phoenix is dancing in the sky. Since the lamp has gone out, please come out at once.” Fojian’s intention was this: if one is in darkness, one walks out of the darkness. This is the vigorously aspiring aspect of the Chan school—standing atop the highest mountain.

Foyan said, “An iron serpent lies across the ancient road.” That is: “The road is blocked by an iron serpent; whatever you do, do not move!” Foyan’s intention was this: let the iron serpent stretch across the road as it may; I remain immovable. This is the indomitable aspect of the Chan school—walking along the deepest ocean floor.

Foguo said, “Watch your step.” That is: “Master, be careful where you step; do not fall.” Foguo’s intention was to respond to circumstances and handle affairs, grasping the present without contrivance. When favorable conditions arise, one may stand atop the highest mountain; when adverse conditions arise, one does not avoid walking along the deepest ocean floor.

The Master praised Foguo: “The one who will bring my school to an end will be none other than Keqin.” “My school” refers to the Linji school. When Chan Master Linji entered parinirvāṇa, he recited this verse in transmitting the Dharma: “If one follows the stream without ceasing, how can one ask what it is? True illumination is boundless; to speak of it is like speaking of another [read ta as tuo for the rhyme]. Those who have left appearances and names do not receive it; once the hair-blowing sword has been used, it must be swiftly sharpened.”

He then addressed the assembly: “After I am gone, do not bring my Treasury of the True Dharma Eye to an end.” Sansheng stepped forward and said, “How could we dare bring the Master’s Treasury of the True Dharma Eye to an end?” The master said, “If someone later asks you about it, what will you tell them?” Sansheng then gave a shout. The master said, “Who would have known that my Treasury of the True Dharma Eye would come to an end at the hands of this blind donkey?” Having finished speaking, he sat upright and passed away.

The Dharma-transmission certificate of the Chan school bears the four large characters “Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.” The certificate represents the transmission of the Dharma lineage and is therefore called the “Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.” Does not “end” mean “to extinguish” or “to disappear”? Yet both Linji, in praising Sansheng, and Wuzu, in praising Foguo, used the word “end.” And yet the Linji school flourished greatly in Foguo’s hands. Why is the word “end” used in words of praise? Everyone, tell me.

[The Following Content Is from a Forum]

The school is wood, and fire is light? Kang Kang 08:54:20 7/02/02 (no content)

Since it is said that not a single dharma is established, it must be brought into actual practice.—Even one’s own Dharma is not established. lvm 09:13:31 7/02/02 (351)

? lixy 02:11:58 7/06/02 (no content)

Let go at the edge of a cliff. Dingling 07:47:21 7/06/02 (no content)

Footnotes . . . gszy 11:02:17 7/04/02 (6K)

How, then, do you face people? etum 09:16:25 7/02/02 (no content)

With the expansive mind that has no self, no person, no sentient being, and no life span: responding without responding, and not responding while responding. lvm 09:35:58 7/02/02 (no content)

You are not keeping company with Lanrong, are you? Yuanzhi 22:50:20 7/02/02 (no content)

A tiger is coming! lvm 23:09:05 7/02/02 (no content)

What appearance is it? Yuanzhi 23:14:42 7/02/02 (no content)

Ha ha! A mouse is coming. lvm 23:39:13 7/02/02 (no content)

Squeak, squeak, squeak— xlsh 18:28:26 7/03/02 (no content)

It looks like a pig—round all over, except . . . Big Mouse 23:23:00 7/02/02 (no content)

Is it a mouse? Is it not a mouse? Yuanzhi 23:27:26 7/02/02 (no content)

It is you! Big Mouse 23:28:37 7/02/02 (no content)

Ha ha! Could Yuanzhi be a wild animal? Yuanzhi 23:33:39 7/02/02 (no content)

If you willingly debase yourself, there is nothing others can do about it. Big Mouse 23:36:16 7/02/02 (no content)

To regard oneself as a wild animal is to fall into birth and death! Yuanzhi 23:49:01 7/02/02 (no content)

Could it be that outwardly one manifests the body of a wild animal while inwardly concealing the conduct of a bodhisattva? gszy 11:56:00 7/03/02 (103)

When Asaṅga first saw Maitreya, he saw only a mangy dog! Yuanzhi 22:41:16 7/04/02 (238)

Heh heh, what should one do when a mouse comes? Big Mouse 23:51:54 7/02/02 (no content)

Why not ask the mouse itself, brother? Yuanzhi 00:02:26 7/03/02 (no content)

Have you really not seen the mouse come? Big Mouse 00:05:34 7/03/02 (no content)

Or put it in a cage for children to play with! Yuanzhi 00:12:51 7/03/02 (no content)

Be careful not to put yourself in there too. Big Mouse 00:15:40 7/03/02 (no content)

If it can come out by itself, there is no problem! Yuanzhi 00:32:26 7/03/02 (no content)

At this very moment, is it inside or outside? Big Mouse 00:35:41 7/03/02 (no content)

When one realizes it, there is already no distinction! Yuanzhi 00:46:38 7/03/02 (no content)

Do you realize it, sir? Big Mouse 00:48:20 7/03/02 (no content)

Once it is over, it is forgotten! Yuanzhi 00:50:53 7/03/02 (no content)

Can you accept that? Big Mouse 00:57:03 7/03/02 (no content)

Dharmas arising from causes and conditions also cease through causes and conditions; why speak of acceptance or nonacceptance? Yuanzhi 01:03:55 7/03/02 (no content)

Ha ha, this whole long string of posts turns out to be dharmas arising from causes and conditions, so it has nothing to do with you! Big Mouse 01:07:01 7/03/02 (no content)

Yuanzhi too is within causes and conditions; he is not outside them! Yuanzhi 01:11:33 7/03/02 (no content)

If the last post was not yours, would you still not be finished? Big Mouse 01:25:00 7/03/02 (64)

If I see it, I will kill it with one blow of the stick! Yuanzhi 00:08:53 7/03/02 (no content)

Do you see it now? Big Mouse 00:10:17 7/03/02 (no content)

Even the one who sees is not real! Yuanzhi 00:37:47 7/03/02 (no content)

If it is not real, what appearance is it? Big Mouse 00:39:48 7/03/02 (no content)

A candy figurine! Yuanzhi 00:48:19 7/03/02 (no content)

What is your likeness, compared with Yuanzhi? Big Mouse 00:51:42 7/03/02 (no content)

Hee hee! You have to eat more candy figurines to become round! Yuanzhi 01:06:08 7/03/02 (no content)

Ha ha, no wonder you are called Yuanzhi! Big Mouse 01:08:13 7/03/02 (no content)

I turned into a candy figurine long ago! Yuanzhi 09:35:42 7/03/02 (no content)

A name is merely a label bestowed by one’s revered teacher! Yuanzhi 01:16:13 7/03/02 (no content)

So you also know to respect your own master? Big Rat 01:25:10 7/03/02 (no content)

Better not turn it into superstition! Yuanzhi 09:36:33 7/03/02 (no content)

Looking down on everything, with spirit vast enough to swallow mountains and rivers? Kangkang 11:22:28 7/02/02 (no content)

A forcibly twisted melon cannot be eaten. Lao Meng 13:09:06 7/02/02 (no content)

Joyful praise! This is precisely a model of sitting amid charcoal. etum 09:44:35 7/02/02 (58)

Being is precisely nonbeing, and nonbeing is precisely being. If it is not so, there is certainly no need to guard it. lvm 10:15:25 7/02/02 (64)

Then what of thus punishing evil and promoting good?! etum 10:29:37 7/02/02 (14)

The fundamental purpose of establishing the tenets and discerning right from wrong lies in... gszy 11:00:39 7/02/02 (143)

Who cannot talk about principles? Say a word, then. xlsh 19:11:48 7/02/02 (no content)

Picking up sesame seeds while throwing away a watermelon. gszy 09:46:57 7/03/02 (no content)

I've gained, I've gained! xlsh 18:31:23 7/03/02 (no content)

Congratulations! Congratulations!! gszy 10:11:41 7/04/02 (300)

Thank you for your compassionate heart. xlsh 20:03:07 7/04/02 (no content)

Thanks! etum 14:25:44 7/02/02 (no content)

Neither Linji nor Yuanwu concealed anything. lvm 10:37:50 7/02/02 (no content)

But I am concealing it! etum 14:27:41 7/02/02 (no content)

Greetings!!! 99477 17:10:32 7/02/02 (14)

I take you as my teacher! 99477 17:07:40 7/02/02 (no content)

^o^ lvm 15:47:20 7/02/02 (no content)

This exchange is marvelous! (It is only a pity that I do not understand it—how shameful!!!) 99477 17:06:56 7/02/02 (no content)

What the teacher says is right: we ourselves conceal ourselves and have failed the patriarchs. Daizi 10:53:39 7/02/02 (no content)

Trouble comes from the mouth. etum 14:28:14 7/02/02 (no content)

As long as even the slightest single view remains, one is clad in armor and bound in chains; extinguishing every view is to carry it forward and bring it to full radiance. Little Junior Brother 08:05:24 7/02/02 (no content)

Those in whom something remains drag through mud and water; those who extinguish it illuminate the great thousandfold world. lvm 08:09:39 7/02/02 (no content)

Those who extinguish it drag through mud and water; those in whom something remains illuminate the great thousandfold world. etum 08:16:05 7/02/02 (no content)

Those who extinguish it drag through mud and water—simply because they fall into emptiness; those in whom something remains illuminate the great thousandfold world—this is called attachment to being. lvm 08:24:16 7/02/02 (no content)

Those in whom something remains drag through mud and water—simply because they fall into emptiness; those who extinguish it illuminate the great thousandfold world—this is called attachment to being. etum 08:34:31 7/02/02 (18)

Only those whose furtive, calculating mind has completely died out—those who extinguish it—can possibly sit amid charcoal. lvm 08:46:04 7/02/02 (54)

Yes. etum 08:53:59 7/02/02 (no content)

This exchange is wonderful! (It is only a pity that I do not understand it—how shameful!!!) 99477 17:04:24 7/02/02 (no content)

I'm running! ~~~… Little Junior Brother 08:11:54 7/02/02 (no content)

Fifty-One: Secrets of Chan Practice

[Original Koan Text]

Caotang attended on Huitang. Huitang raised the case of the wind and the banner and questioned Caotang about it.

Caotang said, "I find no way in at all."

Huitang said, "Have you seen a cat catching a mouse? Its two eyes stare without blinking; its four paws crouch on the ground without moving. Its six sense faculties are all directed forward, and its head and tail form a straight line. Then, whenever it pounces, it never misses. If you can truly let the mind have no other conditions and cut off deluded thoughts in intention, so that the six windows are still and quiet, sitting upright and investigating silently, then not one in ten thousand will fail."

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

The secret of investigating Chan is fully expressed in a single sentence!

[Sawing Open a Steelyard Weight]

Here, "Caotang" refers to Chan Master Caotang Shanqing of Letan, Longxing Prefecture; "Huitang" refers to Caotang's teacher, Chan Master Huanglong Zuxin Baojue of Longxing Prefecture. The "story of the wind and banner" appears in the Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch:

At that time, the wind was blowing and a banner was moving. One monk said, "The wind is moving." Another monk said, "The banner is moving." They debated without end.

Huineng stepped forward and said, “It is not the wind that moves, nor is it the banner that moves. It is your minds that move!” The whole assembly was astonished.

Huitang asked Caotang: The wind is plainly blowing and the banner is dancing, so why did the Sixth Patriarch say that it was the mind that moved? Caotang said, “I find no way in at all”—that is, “I do not understand. How can one attain this state?”

Huitang said: “Have you seen a cat catching a mouse? Its two eyes stare without blinking; its four paws crouch on the ground without moving. Its six sense faculties are all directed forward, and its head and tail form a straight line. Then it pounces with a whoosh, catches it in one grasp, and that big mouse cannot get away. If one can investigate in this way, ‘like a cat catching a mouse’—‘the mind having no other conditions, intention cutting off deluded thoughts, the six windows still and quiet, sitting upright and investigating silently’—then if ten thousand people investigate in this way, all ten thousand can awaken; none will have labored in vain.”

The Elder praised it, saying: “The secret of investigating Chan is fully expressed in a single sentence!” Where is the secret? It is precisely in “its two eyes stare without blinking; its four paws crouch on the ground without moving; its six sense faculties are all directed forward, and its head and tail form a straight line”—that is, “the mind having no other conditions, intention cutting off deluded thoughts, the six windows still and quiet, sitting upright and investigating silently.”

[The Following Content Is from the Forum]

Can it wrap lines automatically? Even a 17-inch monitor is not enough. Mangzhong 12:33:58 7/04/02 (no content)

It was originally set to wrap automatically. It was stretched out like this because of the replies that followed. lvm 09:06:05 7/07/02 (no content)

Teacher, you’re back? You’ve worked hard! Thank you for this big saw. Mangzhong 11:45:17 7/08/02 (no content)

Thank you! lvm 11:56:21 7/08/02 (88)

Thank you, too! Mangzhong 12:05:06 7/08/02 (136)

Do not force yourself to add extra meditation sessions; take ease and naturalness as the measure. lvm 14:11:00 7/08/02 (no content)

Teacher, please check your mail. Mangzhong 15:58:12 7/08/02 (no content)

I have replied by email. lvm 16:19:11 7/08/02 (no content)

Received. Thank you! Mangzhong 16:26:54 7/08/02 (no content)

If we're going to investigate Chan, then investigate Chan—why do you always let cats take advantage? It's not fair! Big Mouse 22:17:01 7/02/02 (no content)

Meow ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ Little Cat 20:35:41 7/03/02 (no content)

Didn't you say you weren't afraid of cats? ^o^ lvm 22:22:14 7/02/02 (no content)

Luckily this cat keeps the precepts. Big Mouse 22:36:06 7/02/02 (no content)

Though waves arise, they make no breakers. lvm 23:07:01 7/02/02 (no content)

Homage! Big Mouse 23:11:03 7/02/02 (no content)

Rejoicing, too, in the merit of keeping the precepts, making no breakers, and paying homage! Yuanzhi 23:55:31 7/02/02 (no content)

Shared joy, shared joy. Big Mouse 23:58:57 7/02/02 (no content)

Bring out the mouse-head guillotine!~ Little Junior Brother 01:52:53 7/03/02 (no content)

Mighty!~ Martial!~~~ Big Mouse 17:57:38 7/03/02 (no content)

Hee hee! If one can escape alive from a cat's mouth, wouldn't that be an even greater advantage? Yuanzhi 22:43:10 7/02/02 (no content)

Ha ha, where did we leave off last time? Big Mouse 22:47:44 7/02/02 (no content)

It seems there was a problem with the archive! Yuanzhi 22:54:33 7/02/02 (no content)

That is all right too; it has already passed. Big Mouse 22:58:08 7/02/02 (no content)

May I ask: Is the cat that can take advantage of Big Mouse a white cat, or a black cat? Yuanzhi 23:02:16 7/02/02 (no content)

As long as it's a cat. gszy 11:12:03 7/03/02 (no content)

I'll kick you back to your old hometown! Big Mouse 23:07:05 7/02/02 (18)

Don't rush! Don't rush!! gszy 11:21:46 7/03/02 (13)

Hee hee! Watch out for mouse feet! Yuanzhi 10:00:47 7/03/02 (no content)

That was a quick reaction. Big Mouse 21:42:01 7/03/02 (no content)

After escaping alive, is everything clearly known? Yuanzhi 23:11:00 7/02/02 (24)

Go teach those few disciples of yours instead. Big Mouse 23:14:22 7/02/02 (34)

Can’t I even ask for instruction? Yuanzhi 23:16:25 7/02/02 (no content)

Ha ha, whom are you asking for instruction from? Big Mouse 23:18:27 7/02/02 (no content)

In any case, you cannot get away from mice or cats! Yuanzhi 23:25:19 7/02/02 (no content)

And what about you? Big Mouse 23:26:28 7/02/02 (no content)

I can’t see mice or cats! Yuanzhi 23:39:26 7/02/02 (no content)

Be careful when you cross the road! Big Mouse 23:41:02 7/02/02 (no content)

Once you have seen enough cars, there won’t be a problem! Yuanzhi 23:45:00 7/02/02 (no content)

That is all. Big Mouse 23:47:54 7/02/02 (no content)

It is originally so! Yuanzhi 09:53:56 7/03/02 (no content)

! Kangkang 20:34:10 7/02/02 (no content)

What a splendid “two eyes stare without blinking”! Yuanzhi 20:07:06 7/02/02 (54)

A warning to those who mind the head but not the tail. Shancai 22:12:56 7/02/02 (18)

Can we investigate one step more deeply? Yuanzhi 22:39:40 7/02/02 (22)

Could staring itself give rise to a sign of strain? Yuanzhi 22:57:13 7/02/02 (12)

And besides— Yuanzhi 22:59:36 7/02/02 (18)

This is a metaphor..... gszy 10:36:25 7/03/02 (82)

Let both eyes clearly illumine empty space, and see what is not within one’s own mind! Yuanzhi 18:37:44 7/07/02 (no content)

But Yuanzhi is outside the sign of strain. Big Mouse 23:29:13 7/02/02 (no content)

Clouds and smoke passing before the eyes—why exert yourself to grasp at them..... gszy 10:59:56 7/03/02 (no content)

To be outside the sign of strain is not Yuanzhi; Yuanzhi fell into a cesspit long ago! Yuanzhi 23:37:47 7/02/02 (no content)

It truly is a case of the benevolent seeing benevolence! Big Rat 23:39:14 7/02/02 (no content)

Heh, he sees it as the wise do. xlsh 18:25:56 7/03/02 (16)

Do you think a benevolent person would deliberately jump into a cesspit? Yuanzhi 23:52:27 7/02/02 (no content)

Oh? Then why did Yuanzhi jump in? Big Rat 23:54:16 7/02/02 (no content)

Heh heh! Birds of a feather stink together! Yuanzhi 00:00:17 7/03/02 (no content)

Where does the stink come from? Big Rat 00:01:59 7/03/02 (no content)

Doesn't it come from the “benevolent person”? Yuanzhi 00:04:57 7/03/02 (no content)

If the benevolent person stinks, he should be called a stinking person. Why call him benevolent again? Big Rat 00:07:47 7/03/02 (no content)

To dwell amid stink yet recognize it as stink, to remain undeluded yet be able to endure the stink—this is called a benevolent person! Yuanzhi 00:27:21 7/03/02 (no content)

Who is stinking? Who knows the stink? Big Rat 00:33:29 7/03/02 (no content)

We are originally all things from the same pit! Yuanzhi 00:43:47 7/03/02 (no content)

Then where is there a benevolent person? Where is there a cesspit? Big Rat 00:46:06 7/03/02 (no content)

It is too late tonight. Shall we meet again? Yuanzhi 00:57:30 7/03/02 (26)

Today has already been superfluous. Must we meet again? Big Rat 01:00:37 7/03/02 (no content)

We have become inseparable already! Ha ha! Yuanzhi 01:08:39 7/03/02 (no content)

Is this what you call opening the mind and understanding its meaning? Big Rat 01:14:12 7/03/02 (no content)

We passed the transfer station long ago! Yuanzhi 01:19:15 7/03/02 (no content)

You've put the car in reverse, haven't you? Big Rat 01:24:13 7/03/02 (no content)

^o^ lvm 22:22:39 7/02/02 (no content)

Amitābha Buddha! It seems they have already been assimilated. May ten thousand who practice, ten thousand attain realization, and all ascend to the Land of Ultimate Bliss. yzhj01 20:52:55 7/02/02 (no content)

I shall answer by borrowing a line from the Diamond Sūtra! Yuanzhi 22:08:44 7/02/02 (72)

Who is a sage or worthy? Yuren 22:06:32 7/12/02 (no content)

Sameness and difference lie with people, not with the Dharma. If all were the same, Buddhas would be everywhere. Where there is difference, there are naturally distinctions. yzhj01 19:08:47 7/03/02 (no content)

Fifty-Two: Head Seat Qingsu

[Original Koan Text]

Head Seat Qing Su, a native of Fujian, studied under Ciming for thirteen years. At the age of eighty, he was residing at Luyuan in Huxiang. He had never associated with others, and no one knew who he was. By chance, Head Seat Yue, a native of Chuzhou, became his neighbor.

Once, Yue was eating honey-preserved lychees when Su passed his door. Yue called out, “These are fruits from the old man's native region; let us eat them together.”

Su said, “Since my late master passed away, I have not eaten these for a long time.”

Yue asked, “Who was your former master?”

Su said, “Ciming.” Yue was then astonished and doubtful. He gave Su the remaining fruit, and gradually became close to him.

Later, Su asked, “Whom have you seen?”

Yue said, “Venerable Wen of Dongshan.”

Su further asked, “Whom did Wen see?”

Yue replied, “Venerable Nan.”

Su said, “Nan Flathead studied with my former master for only a short time, yet later his Dharma activity flourished so greatly!” Yue was even more astonished.

One day, Yue carried incense to Su and made prostrations. Su avoided him, saying, “My blessings are too slight; my former master foretold that I was not permitted to take disciples.”

After more than a month, moved by Yue’s sincerity, Su said, “Tell me about the understanding you have attained in your life, and let me see it.”

Yue fully explained his realization. Su said, “You can enter Buddha, but you cannot enter Māra.” He also said, “Only at the final phrase does one reach the firm barrier.” After half a year like this, Su finally gave him his seal of approval. He nevertheless admonished him: “What Wen showed you was all right view. Although I have pointed it out to you, enabling you to make free use of it, I fear that you left your teacher too early and cannot fully receive his Way. In the future, you must not succeed me.”

Later, when he emerged to teach, he succeeded Zhenjing. This was Doushuai Congyue.

[Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight]

Look at the following lineage chart, and you will see that Chan Master Doushuai Congyue encountered someone of his grandmaster’s generation:

Shishuang Chuyuan Huanglong Huinan Baofeng Kewen Doushuai Congyue

  Head Seat Qing Su

In this koan, “Ciming” refers to Chan Master Shishuang Chuyuan; “Venerable Nan” refers to Chan Master Huanglong Huinan; and “Venerable Wen of Dongshan” refers to Chan Master Baofeng Kewen—that is, Chan Master Zhenjing.

Head Seat Qing Su was from Fujian. He studied under Ciming for thirteen years and fully received Ciming’s essential teaching. At the age of eighty, he lived in seclusion at Luyuan Monastery in Huxiang. He seldom associated with others, and no one knew his background. Chan Master Doushuai Congyue lived in the adjoining room.

One day, Chan Master Yue was eating honey-preserved lychees, a Fujian specialty, in his room. Seeing Head Seat Qing Su pass the doorway, he called him in to eat with him, and the two began to talk. The head seat said, “Since my late master entered parinirvāṇa, I have not eaten honey-preserved lychees for a long time.” When Chan Master Yue asked who his former master was, the head seat replied that it was Ciming. This greatly shocked Yue: Ciming was the teacher of his master’s master. Chan Master Yue gave all his remaining honey-preserved lychees to the head seat as a gesture of respect and closeness.

Later, the head seat asked Chan Master Yue, “Who is your teacher?” Yue replied, “I have studied with Venerable Zhenjing.” The head seat then asked, “Who was Zhenjing’s teacher?” Yue answered, “Venerable Huanglong Huinan.” Head Seat Qing Su said, “Nan Flathead did not study Chan with my former master for very long. I had not expected his Dharma activity to flourish so greatly.” Qing Su and Chan Master Huanglong Huinan were Dharma brothers. Perhaps Master Nan’s head was somewhat flat, which is why he was called “Nan Flathead.” This made Chan Master Yue still more astonished.

At that time, Chan Master Yue had not yet thoroughly penetrated the Chan Dharma. He prepared incense and made prostrations, wishing to take Head Seat Qing Su as his teacher and study Chan with him. The head seat withdrew, saying, “Because my blessings are too slight, my former master instructed me not to accept disciples.” Yet Chan Master Yue continued to plead earnestly.

After seeking instruction in this way for more than a month, Chan Master Yue’s sincerity moved Head Seat Qing Su, who agreed to instruct him in Chan and asked him first to speak of his own understanding. Chan Master Yue then described what he had realized through studying Chan with Chan Master Zhenjing. The head seat said, “Your understanding can enter Buddha, but it cannot enter Māra.” He further told him, “Only at the final phrase does one reach the firm barrier.”

Your understanding is still far from adequate. They worked at this for half a year. During those six months, Chan Master Yue’s skin entirely fell away, and his original true radiance shone forth brilliantly. Seeing that he had thoroughly penetrated, Head Seat Qing Su admonished him: “What Zhenjing taught you about Chan is all right view. Although I have pointed it out to you, enabling you to use it freely, it was because I feared that you had left Zhenjing too early and had not received Zhenjing’s true intent. In the future, do not succeed me; succeed Zhenjing instead.”

Later, when Chan Master Doushuai Congyue emerged to teach the Dharma, he followed Head Seat Qing Su’s instruction and succeeded Chan Master Baofeng Kewen Zhenjing. Among Chan Master Zhenjing’s many Dharma heirs, Chan Master Doushuai Congyue was the most outstanding.

53. Fadao of Dongshan

[Original Text of the Koan]

While the monk Wù of Yunju was at Longmen, a monk was bitten by a snake. Foyan asked, “Since this is the Dragon Gate, why was he bitten by a snake?”

Wù immediately replied, “It indeed reveals the marks of a great person!”

Later, when these words were conveyed to Zhaojue, Yuanwu said, “Does Longmen have such a monk? The Dharma way of Dongshan is not yet desolate.”

[Sawing Open a Steelyard Weight]

When those of the highest capacity hear the Way, they diligently put it into practice; when those of middling capacity hear the Way, it seems at times to exist and at times to vanish; when those of the lowest capacity hear the Way, they laugh aloud at it. If they did not laugh, it would not be enough to be called the Way.

Chan Master Yunju Shanwu was a Dharma heir of Chan Master Longmen Qingyuan, known as Foyan. When Master Wù was studying Chan at Longmen, someone was bitten by a snake. Of course, the person was immediately treated; that goes without saying. Yet Chan Master Longmen Qingyuan suddenly used this incident to ask, “Since this is the Dragon Gate, why was he bitten by a snake?”—Everyone was studying the Dharma way of the Chan school at the Longmen practice center. Since it is called the “Way,” why should it instead be ridiculed by those of the lowest capacity? Here, “Dragon Gate” symbolizes the Way; the dragon symbolizes those of the highest capacity, and the snake symbolizes those of the lowest capacity.

Chan Master Yunju Shanwu answered at once, “It indeed reveals the marks of a great person!”—Indeed, it reveals the nobility of the Dharma way of the Chan school. If they did not ridicule it, the nobility of the Chan Dharma way would not be revealed. That is, “If they did not laugh, it would not be enough to be called the Way.”

This exchange was later conveyed to Foguo Yuanwu Keqin, who praised it, saying, “Does Longmen have such a monk? The Dharma way of Dongshan is not yet desolate.”—Such a quick-witted patch-robed monk has unexpectedly emerged under my Dharma brother’s seat. The Dharma way transmitted by my teacher will not decline. Why worry that there will be no successors?

According to the lamp records, Chan Master Wuzu Fayan—the teacher of the Three Buddhas, Foguo, Foyan, and Fojian—“first resided at Simian, then moved to Baiyun, and in his later years lived at Dongshan”; and “at his cremation, relics fell like rain, and a stūpa was erected south of Dongshan.” Thus, the “Dharma way of Dongshan” refers to the Dharma way transmitted by Chan Master Fayan.

This is the narrow sense. In a broader sense, the Fifth Patriarch, Master Hongren of the Chan school, established a stūpa at Dongshan in Huangmei. The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch says, “Huineng then opened the Dharma gate of Dongshan beneath the bodhi tree.” Thus, the “Dharma way of Dongshan” broadly refers to the Chan school.

54. Caotang Deye

[Original Koan]

Caotang encountered the Master at Linchuan.

Han Zicang invited the Master to his private residence and asked, “How is Master Qing?”

The Master said, “I once heard that, when he cited the circumstances of Layman Pang’s question to Mazu, ‘Who is one who does not take the myriad dharmas as companions?’ Qing commented, ‘Where would fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs be placed?’ If this is so, his reputation is undeserved.”

Zicang conveyed these words to Caotang, who said, “Tell him: ‘It is like one person traveling by boat and another traveling by land; both arrive.’”

When the Master heard this, he said, “Caotang has attained it.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Caotang Shanqing of Letan in Longxing Prefecture and Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, the author of this book, Armory of the Chan School, met at Linchuan.

Lay practitioner Han Zicang invited Chan Master Dahui to his home and privately asked him, “What is Chan Master Caotang Qing’s level of realization? Has he attained the essential teaching of the Chan school?”

Chan Master Dahui said, “I once heard that, when he cited the circumstances of ‘not taking the myriad dharmas as companions,’ he commented, ‘Where would fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs be placed?’ If that is his comment, he has no more than an undeserved empty reputation.” Why did Dahui say this? Let us look at the circumstances of “not taking the myriad dharmas as companions”:”

Layman Pang visited Mazu and asked, “Who is one who does not take the myriad dharmas as companions?” Mazu said, “When you swallow all the water of the Western River in one gulp, I will tell you.” At these words, Pang immediately grasped the profound import.

In commenting on this koan, Caotang Qing merely followed the verbal thread: since you have swallowed all the water of the Western River in one gulp, then where would “fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs” be placed? This has no connection at all with “not taking the myriad dharmas as companions.” No wonder Chan Master Dahui said that his reputation was undeserved.

Lay practitioner Han Zicang conveyed Chan Master Dahui's assessment to Chan Master Caotang Qing. Caotang Qing said, "Go and tell Dahui: 'It is like one person traveling by boat and another traveling by land; both arrive.'"

When Chan Master Dahui heard this, he acknowledged Caotang: "Caotang has attained it." That is, Caotang Qing had attained the essential teaching of the Chan school. What was so good about Caotang's remark that Dahui acknowledged his attainment? Let us see:

It is like one person traveling by boat and another traveling by land: there are many expedient methods.

Both arrive: there are not two roads in returning to the source.

This was not an argument over whether the earlier remark, "Where would fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs be placed?" was correct. Rather, it showed that this remark no longer merely followed the verbal thread. Had he responded as before, he might again have followed the verbal thread of "undeserved reputation" and answered something like, "Can empty fame be attained?" That would be entanglement, not Chan!

Caotang Qing did not follow Dahui's verbal thread. He pointed out that "there are not two roads in returning to the source, while there are many expedient methods." Caotang belonged to the Huanglong branch, while Dahui belonged to the Yangqi branch. Though their Chan styles differed somewhat, both were orthodox heirs of Linji. Dahui saw that Caotang had broken free of his former rut and that his present words rang with force; therefore, he acknowledged that he "had attained it."

[Related Links]

Could the teacher explain the original meaning of Chan Master Caotang Qing's comment? Shangchi 09:18:59 7/09/02 (194)

The moment one explains it, the original meaning is lost. Since the grass beneath our feet is already several yards deep, let us spin a little more tangled vine: lvm 10:18:14 7/09/02 (554)

Didn't the old teacher say that one should follow the visitor's verbal thread? Hancun Shadajie 20:24:21 7/09/02 (24)

If you can make him feel the pain and itch, there is no harm in following his verbal thread. lvm 21:51:36 7/09/02 (No content)

How could I have such ability? Hancun Shadajie 15:18:12 7/10/02 (46)

Silly elder sister and foolish younger brother really are one family; even their deluded thoughts are the same. Shangchi 16:52:28 7/10/02 (No content)

If he responded to you that way, what would you do? lvm 16:17:25 7/10/02 (No content)

I would answer him: The fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs are right in the monk's mouth. Hancun Shadajie 14:01:44 7/12/02 (190)

Ha ha! Now they are in your mouth. lvm 14:25:08 7/12/02 (921)

I do not understand what you mean. Hancun Shadajie 14:41:29 7/12/02 (1K)

Presuming to act in another's place, I will speak a few random words. yzhj01 20:05:54 7/12/02 (2K)

What you said is good: lvm 21:07:57 7/12/02 (113)

Everyone, reflect on this: using the mind faculty to penetrate the huatou is apparently not how "elder sister" investigates it, is it? yzhj01 08:33:55 7/13/02 (No content)

That is not how one investigates it. lvm 09:06:08 7/13/02 (38)

Yes. yzhj01 10:01:14 7/13/02 (No content)

Are you speaking of swelling? Could excessive thinking and exertion have caused a deviation? yzhj01 08:30:47 7/13/02 (No content)

Correct! It was caused by exerting too much force. lvm 09:05:05 7/13/02 (No content)

Then I will say no more. lvm 15:50:54 7/12/02 (No content)

. Hancun Shadajie 18:25:42 7/12/02 (No content)

Teacher, let me offer a response: Shangchi 16:37:00 7/10/02 (400)

If one has already attained it, then even if one opposes the teacher at every moment, I believe the teacher will acknowledge it. If one has not attained it, no matter how well one speaks, it is useless. yzhj01 11:32:28 7/11/02 (No content)

If one has not yet awakened thoroughly, how can wondrous functioning arise? lvm 18:06:55 7/10/02 (No content)

How can the single word "thorough" possibly suffice? — Shangchi 20:34:34 7/10/02 (62)

All right, let us suppose: lvm 20:54:46 7/10/02 (257)

But it has already been made clear. Hancun Shadajie 18:38:52 7/11/02 (No content)

I believe you understand it clearly. lvm 18:56:39 7/11/02 (No content)

That is not what I mean. The deluded thoughts continue: Hancun Shadajie 13:53:48 7/12/02 (345)

Please look back again: lvm 14:03:39 7/12/02 (343)

I have all of everyone else's faults. Hancun Shadajie 14:18:18 7/12/02 (No content)

Teacher, if my assumption is correct, this question does not exist: Shangchi 11:45:18 7/11/02 (330)

Oh! Perhaps you are right. lvm 12:48:29 7/11/02 (No content)

Teacher, let me also make an assumption: Shangchi 21:54:08 7/10/02 (198)

At this stage, the practitioner has already "swallowed all the water of the Western River in one gulp," yet the old master Caotang has him spit it back out— Shangchi 22:02:14 7/10/02 (32)

Teacher, please join the discussion: Shangchi 08:40:25 7/11/02 (50)

State it all together concisely, and you may suddenly understand. lvm 09:14:49 7/11/02 (No content)

Could the teacher please offer some guidance? Shangchi 10:19:27 7/11/02 (No content)

Please reread the post, "All right, let us suppose." lvm 10:24:40 7/11/02 (No content)

As the saying goes, "Because there is nothing to attain, one attains unsurpassed perfect enlightenment"— Shangchi 22:20:56 7/10/02 (No content)

Teacher, part of the content of the previous post was pasted in by mistake. Please delete it— Shangchi 22:06:01 7/10/02 (No content)

Deleted. lvm 22:40:44 7/10/02 (No content)

Teacher, I have finished speaking. Shangchi 22:45:02 7/10/02 (No content)

It didn't mention, "Where do fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs settle?" Ah! lvm 23:17:17 7/10/02 (no content)

A merely nominal phrase—there was never anywhere to grasp it in the first place!!! Shangchi 10:22:13 7/11/02 (no content)

Good! Then let us stop speaking in merely nominal phrases. lvm 10:29:35 7/11/02 (no content)

Please continue... lvm 21:57:01 7/10/02 (no content)

Teacher, please come in: Shangchi 11:22:39 7/11/02 (967)

Haha! Perhaps I am the one who is confused. lvm 12:51:14 7/11/02 (38)

Since Teacher puts it this way, I should reflect on the net of precepts! Shangchi 13:47:47 7/11/02 (194)

Elder brother, don't cry; don't take it to heart. Junior disciple 07:03:14 7/12/02 (no content)

No! No! That is not what I mean. lvm 14:19:32 7/11/02 (48)

Moderator, please delete the repeated characters “ ” after “ ” in the above post; they were typed twice. Shangchi, 16:40:51, 7/10/02 (no content)

All right! It has been corrected. lvm 18:14:12 7/10/02 (no content)

Perhaps it means “following along.” Sudhana 21:02:44 7/09/02 (8)

lvm, you are amazing~~ Could you introduce yourself? puzzle 19:04:58 7/09/02 (no content)

Is lvm a disciple of Master Yuanyin? Wow, that is amazing! > (no content)

Homage to the Root Guru, Acharya Yuanyin! lvm 21:52:56 7/09/02 (no content)

What does “root guru” mean? Mangzhong 11:51:15 7/10/02 (no content)

This originates with our fundamental teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha. Zhongbushuo 17:25:19 7/14/02 (344)

You may have received empowerments from several gurus. lvm 11:58:55 7/10/02 (74)

Wrong. Weiyin 08:49:08 7/12/02 (no content)

I understand. Thank you! Mangzhong 17:54:00 7/10/02 (no content)

Teacher Lvm, please come in: Shangchi 17:53:29 7/09/02 (132)

If one does not fall into fixed patterns, there is no need to worry that fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs will have nowhere to settle. lvm 18:01:14 7/09/02 (98)

Since Caotang Qing was already awakened, there must have been a purpose to those remarks— Shangchi 18:10:58 7/09/02 (no content)

Caotang Qing's two remarks were made very far apart in time. lvm 18:20:02 7/09/02 (46)

Had he not yet attained realization when he made the first remark? Shangchi 11:00:45 7/10/02 (no content)

That is why Dahui Gao said that he “had gained his reputation undeservedly.” lvm 11:40:32 7/10/02 (no content)

The Case of “Caotang Qing”: Second Court Hearing. Zhongbushuo 13:51:26 7/15/02|09 (5K)

Impressive! You have thoroughly confused me. 3193 23:21:35 7/15/02 (no content)

The Case of “Caotang Qing”: Defense Counsel's Statement at the Second Court Hearing. Lion 20:05:18 7/15/02 (8K)

Haha, why not let Bag serve once more as foreperson of the jury? Bag 12:03:37 7/16/02 (no content)

This foreperson's ruling is as follows: Bag 12:19:57 7/16/02 (1K)

Hehe~ Interesting. Zhongbushuo 09:36:52 7/17/02 (no content)

No appeals permitted! Dismissed! Bag 11:51:00 7/17/02 (no content)

If “Where do fish, dragons, shrimp, and crabs settle?” is read as a rhetorical question with an affirmative force, then it is a self-question and self-answer from the primary position, orderly and well structured. Light Weapons 11:48:28 7/16/02 (no content)

Ha! Elder brother Lion has arrived. How have you been? I have not seen you for a long time and have missed you very much. Zhongbushuo 10:22:30 7/16/02 (no content)

Then quickly leave some contact information. I am preparing to come and visit you. Lion 13:33:48 7/16/02 (no content)

Beijing has been unbearably hot lately. I, too, have suffered heatstroke and am resting at home. Zhongbushuo 18:30:21 7/16/02 (54)

I had always thought you were elsewhere; it turns out you are right nearby. It would be more convenient for me to come to you. Lion 23:14:34 7/16/02 (no content)

Oh~ Lion is in Beijing too? Hehe. Zhongbushuo 09:08:39 7/17/02 (260)

Ah? Don't tell me you are neighbors? Mangzhong 11:41:27 7/17/02 (62)

Oh~ Are you here too, brother? Ha, I am at Yihe Shanzhuang, by the North Gate. Zhongbushuo 17:16:44 7/17/02 (64)

I am at the Agricultural University, three kilometers north of the Summer Palace (Xiyuan). Mangzhong 18:13:40 7/17/02 (21)

Brother Bushuo, you have heat-induced influenza. Wait until you recover, and then I can come visit you. Lion 11:24:33 7/17/02 (no content)

OK, OK. Zhongbushuo 17:18:28 7/17/02 (no content)

Contact information. Zhongbushuo 14:03:10 7/16/02 (71)

Different is different. This lawyer's assistant is retiring to the second line; let the chief lawyer take the stage. yzhj01 20:17:05 7/15/02 (no content)

I respect the court's ruling and promise not to appeal. lvm 15:41:58 7/15/02 (no content)

It is good, but too yielding. If it were Bag, I would answer: The state has its laws, and the family has its rules! Bag 12:55:15 7/16/02 (no content)

But what can be done when family rules cannot prevail over state law? lvm 13:09:49 7/16/02 (no content)

Hehe, Teacher is joking. Such freedom is truly like a wisp of cloud adorning the vast clear sky! Bag 13:18:46 7/16/02 (no content)

Haha! The bag of heaven and earth can hold the sky. lvm 13:28:01 7/16/02 (no content)

Such a heaven-containing capacity must be more useful in Teacher's hands; as for... Bag 11:50:30 7/17/02 (67)

Whenever I see [Bag], I always think of the smiling Budai Monk. lvm 12:00:13 7/17/02 (no content)

Hehe, interesting. Bag 13:21:21 7/17/02 (189)

You would even strike someone for speaking! I insist on speaking, ^_^! yzhj01 14:34:19 7/17/02 (no content)

Let me quickly explain: Those afraid of the stick are not students; students should receive the stick. Give rise to the mind while abiding nowhere; abide nowhere while giving rise to the mind. yzhj01 19:39:27 7/17/02 (no content)

^o^ lvm 14:19:43 7/17/02 (208)

How unfair! The Dharma teacher will not appeal, so the lawyer's defense fee has gone down the drain again. Sigh. Zhongbushuo 17:34:49 7/15/02 (no content)

So interesting! Here comes someone greedy for money. yzhj01 19:36:18 7/15/02 (815)

Alas. Big Rat 14:38:09 7/15/02 (1K)

Brother Rat, why sigh for no reason? yzhj01 19:35:02 7/15/02 (no content)

Don't sigh and groan! Brother Rat, where are you feeling unwell? Never Speak 17:26:17 7/15/02 (no content)

Only because I have always known the spirit! Big Rat 19:42:53 7/15/02 (no content)

Fifty-Five: Rare World-Honored One

[Original Text of the Koan]

Subhūti was foremost in understanding emptiness; when he was born, everything in his household was found empty. As soon as the World-Honored One ascended the seat, Subhūti stepped forth from the assembly and said, “Rare indeed, World-Honored One.” Tell me, what principle did he perceive that made him speak so?

Bodhisattva Vasubandhu composed innumerable verses solely in praise of the two words “rare indeed.”

Chan Master Yuanwu said, “Each phrase is like an iron peg. Thus, when the Sixth Patriarch heard, ‘One should give rise to the mind without abiding anywhere,’ he immediately awakened.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

The Diamond Sūtra says: “At mealtime, the World-Honored One put on his robe, took up his bowl, and entered the great city of Śrāvastī to beg for alms. Having begged for alms in due order throughout the city, he returned to his dwelling. When

he had finished eating, he put away his robe and bowl, washed his feet, arranged his seat, and sat down. At that time, the Elder Subhūti, who was among the great assembly, rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, joined his palms reverently, and addressed the Buddha, saying, 'Rare indeed, World-Honored One . . .'" (In praising the two words "rare indeed," Bodhisattva Vasubandhu composed an immense number of verses.)

Chan Master Dahui asked: The World-Honored One had not yet uttered a word. What principle did Subhūti perceive that made him say, "Rare indeed"?

In fact, before the World-Honored One had uttered a word, through such nonattachment and noncontrivance as "putting on his robe, taking up his bowl, entering the great city of Śrāvastī to beg for alms; having begged for alms in due order throughout the city, returning to his dwelling; finishing his meal, putting away his robe and bowl, washing his feet, arranging his seat, and sitting down," he had revealed the Mahāyāna meaning of emptiness—"true reality is without marks; without marks, yet no mark is excluded"—to the fullest. When hungry, eat; when tired, sleep! Subhūti, foremost in understanding emptiness, naturally recognized this, and so his first words were praise: "Rare indeed."

If one is to explain the principle in words, Yuanwu, Dahui's teacher, had already explained it: "Each phrase is like an iron peg." Yuanwu's words praise the two words "rare indeed." He then explained the principle: "Thus, when the Sixth Patriarch heard, 'One should give rise to the mind without abiding anywhere,' he immediately awakened."

"Should"—accord with circumstances, yet do not fall into emptiness.

"Without abiding anywhere"—let the mind be free of hindrance, yet do not cling to existence.

"And give rise to the mind"—what mind is to be given rise to? The Diamond Sūtra says: "One should give rise to a mind that abides nowhere"—accord with circumstances, yet be without attachment.

I once saw a piece of calligraphy by my revered teacher, Master Yuanyin. It read: "Buddha-nature is a natural affair—who says it requires another teacher? In the clearing of the throat and the swinging of the arms, in putting on clothes and eating meals. It requires not the slightest effort; when has thought ever been stirred? All sentient beings are equal, yet in daily life they themselves give rise to much doubt." Do not doubt too much, do not indulge in deluded thoughts, and do not cling; then you may directly realize "rare indeed."

[Related Links]

Do not overthink it; Elder Subhūti was naturally a polite person. gentleLion 21:17:38 7/12/02(61)

If sentient beings did not use so much “mind” to seek complexity, Shancai 21:26:50 7/12/02(18)

Another verse praising “rare indeed.” lvm 21:34:34 7/12/02 (no content)

Inviting the “World-Honored One” to expound the Diamond Sūtra! Shancai 22:36:45 7/12/02 (no content)

Thus have I heard: [accomplishment of faith] [accomplishment of hearing]. lvm 23:01:21 7/12/02(150)

I am a newcomer. Please offer me your guidance! puzzle 15:14:31 7/10/02(74)

Welcome! ^o^ lvm 16:16:05 7/10/02 (no content)

Hehe, thank you~~ puzzle 16:14:40 7/11/02 (no content)

Fifty-Six: Two Sentences Settle It

[Original Koan]

Yuanwu, Foyan, and Fojian were all studying under Wuzu. One day they said to one another, “The old master is simply so crisp and direct that there is often no opening to speak of mind or nature.”

They therefore asked him about the saying, “The Buddha-body is unconditioned and does not fall within any categories.” The patriarch said, “It is like a pure maṇi jewel reflecting the five colors. The five colors are categories; the maṇi is the Buddha-body.”

Yuanwu said to the other two elders, “He is truly adept at speaking. How much effort it takes when we speak! Yet he settles it in just a sentence or two. He is clearly a formidable old tiger.”

When the patriarch heard this, he said, “To speak of mind and nature is abusive speech.” He further said, “A cat has the merit of licking blood; a tiger has the virtue of raising a corpse. As the saying goes, ‘Drive away the plowman’s ox; snatch the hungry man’s food.’ If one is not like this, one is merely a fellow playing with mud balls.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

This koan, too, is a story of the three Buddhas studying under Chan Master Fayan of Wuzu.

One day, the three discussed their teacher: “The old master speaks crisply and directly, leaving no place for you to interrupt; often, one cannot even open one’s mouth to speak of mind or nature.” They therefore approached the old master with the question, “The Buddha-body is unconditioned and does not fall within any categories.” In fact, all three understood that “the Buddha-body is unconditioned” refers to nature, while “the various categories” refers to mind.

Why is it that “the Buddha-body is unconditioned and does not fall within any categories”? To answer this question, one could give an extended explanation of the relationship between mind and nature; even the two words “does not fall within” could require considerable discussion. They asked in this way because they wanted to hear their teacher give a lengthy exposition on mind and nature. Yet the master spoke only two sentences: “It is like a pure maṇi jewel reflecting the five colors. The five colors are categories; the maṇi is the Buddha-body.” The analogy was excellent, and the principle was thoroughly explained as well.

The three then discussed it among themselves. Foguo said to Foyan and Fojian, “How much effort it takes for us to speak of mind and nature! Our teacher, too, could explain it at such length, but he does not do so; he finishes it in only a sentence or two. Our teacher is no ordinary man—he is as formidable as a tiger!”

Chan Master Fayan of Wuzu overheard their discussion and said to them, “To speak at length of mind and nature in theoretical terms is abusive speech.” Abusing others is abusive speech, so how can speaking of mind and nature also become abusive speech? Wuzu meant that such endless, rambling explanation defiles the Buddha-nature that does not fall within language.

Wuzu continued: “A cat has the merit of licking blood; a tiger has the virtue of raising a corpse. As the saying goes, ‘Drive away the plowman’s ox; snatch the hungry man’s food.’ If one is not like this, one is merely a fellow playing with mud balls.” That a cat has the merit of licking blood and a tiger has the virtue of raising a corpse means that I, too, must do right by you. My answer to you is precisely to “drive away the plowman’s ox and snatch the hungry man’s food”: it is meant to sweep away your habit of endlessly discoursing on mind and nature. If you do not learn to answer crisply and directly, you will not be fit for great use; then you may as well go play with mud!

[Related Links]

Because there is “endless rambling,” there is “crisp directness.” gentleLion 21:15:33 7/12/02 (no content)

^o^ lvm 21:40:38 7/12/02 (no content)

57. Discard It Once You Have Used It

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day, the master said to Zhao Juji, “If this old monk were suddenly to withdraw, and someone else came to teach you Chan—how would you understand this turn of conditions? And how would you understand that turn? … Douse him with hot shit! Remember this.”

[Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight]

One day, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said to Zhao Juji: “If I were to step down and no longer teach Chan, and someone else came to teach you Chan—explaining how to understand this koan and how to understand that koan … then splash him with hot excrement! Remember what I have said.”

Dahui’s teacher, Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu Keqin, lectured on the Blue Cliff Record and explained one hundred koans. After it was compiled into a book, it swept through Chan monasteries. Why did it become so popular in the monasteries? Because the Blue Cliff Record can indeed open the gate to awakening. Yet when things reach an extreme, they reverse: if one becomes caught in endless intellectual understanding, it closes the gate to awakening again. Thus, in Dahui’s generation, the printing blocks of the Blue Cliff Record were consigned to the flames. When he said this to Zhao Juji, he may have burned the blocks only shortly before.

Explaining koans can only serve as a tool for opening the mind. Once it has been used, discard it; how can it be set up as a theory? Whoever takes straw dogs that have already been set out and lies beneath them will surely be deluded!

[Related Links]

xixi: I wonder what Chan that old monk taught before he stepped down~ Shancai 21:34:18 7/12/02 (26)

^o^ lvm 21:40:18 7/12/02 (no content)

Words are originally expedient means gentleLion 21:13:09 7/12/02 (71)

58. Verifying It

[Original Text of the Koan]

While the master was serving as head seat at Yunju, he went one day to Xiji Village and encountered a visiting monk who had come from Yuantong. The monk said, “Having read the head seat’s ‘Verse on the Woman Emerging from Samādhi,’ I have gained an insight. I have come especially to ask the head seat to verify it.”

The master said, “Go away! No.”

The monk said, “I have not yet stated my understanding. Why do you say no?”

The master repeatedly waved his hand and said, “Go away! No, no.”

The monk withdrew dejectedly.

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

This itself was verification for him. Alas, the monk did not understand and withdrew dejectedly. What a pity!

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Once, when Mañjuśrī arrived at the gathering place of the Buddhas, he found that each Buddha had returned to his own place. Only one woman remained, seated near the Buddha and absorbed in samādhi. Mañjuśrī addressed the Buddha: “Why is this person permitted to sit near the Buddha while I am not?” The Buddha told Mañjuśrī to awaken the woman from samādhi and question her himself.

Mañjuśrī circumambulated the woman three times and snapped his fingers once. He then transported her to the Brahmā Heaven, but even with all his spiritual powers he could not bring her out. The World-Honored One said, “Even if there were hundreds of thousands of Mañjuśrīs, they could not bring this woman out of samādhi. Below, beyond lands as numerous as the sands of forty-two Ganges rivers, is Bodhisattva Wangming, who can bring her out of samādhi.” Before long, the great being Wangming emerged from the earth and paid homage to the World-Honored One. The World-Honored One instructed Wangming to bring her out. Wangming went before the woman and snapped his fingers once, whereupon she emerged from samādhi.

Meditative skill involving entering and emerging is not right samādhi. In right samādhi there is neither emergence nor entry, neither movement nor stillness. In stillness, one is like a maiden, yet this does not differ from movement; in movement, one is like a fleeing rabbit, yet this does not obstruct stillness. One contemplates emptiness pervading as countless as the sands of the Ganges, while seeing that not a single thing exists; the mental realm is vast and open, and ordinary beings and sages are alike. This alone is right samādhi. Since this woman’s samādhi was not right samādhi, why should it have troubled those two bodhisattvas to transport her

to the Brahmā Heaven or emerge from the earth? Therefore Chan Master Dahui wrote a verse on this koan, "Verse on the Woman Emerging from Samādhi": "Whether she can be brought out or cannot be brought out, this samādhi is not right samādhi. Wangming and Mañjuśrī have lost their very lives in vain."

When Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu, the teacher of Dahui Zonggao, was abbot of the Yunju practice center, Dahui Zonggao was the first seat. One day, Dahui went to nearby Xiji Village and encountered a monk who had come from Chan Master Yuantong Faxiu at Fayun Monastery in the Eastern Capital. The monk said to Dahui: "Having read the head seat's 'Verse on the Woman Emerging from Samādhi,' I have gained an insight. I have come especially to ask the head seat to verify it."

So he had come seeking verification. Chan Master Dahui therefore verified him: "Go away! No." Is this verification? Yes! The Elder's note says: "This itself was verification for him."

What did he verify? He verified that this samādhi was not right samādhi. Had you not read the account of the "Verse on the Woman Emerging from Samādhi" and gained an insight? "Not [right samādhi]" is precisely correct. If it were truly right samādhi, with neither emergence nor entry, it would not allow you to establish an "insight." If this monk had been quick-witted, he need only have said the single word "Understood."

But who would have expected that he would fail to grasp Dahui's meaning and still cling to his "understanding": "I have not yet stated my understanding. Why do you say no?" Ha ha! A moment ago it was an "insight"; now it is an "understanding." Apparently, he was so stifled that he could not refrain from speaking.

You must know that right samādhi, with neither emergence nor entry, does not fall within language. Chan Master Dahui again told him, "Go away! No, no." Still unable to understand, he withdrew in bewilderment, at a complete loss. The Elder sighed over him: "Alas, the monk did not understand and withdrew dejectedly. What a pity!" How can one avoid such a pity? Immediately destroy that "insight" and "understanding," and the lucid right samādhi of neither emergence nor entry will appear before you, illuminating heaven and earth. Would that not be the joy of a lifetime?

Teacher, let me stir up a few complications. 3193 13:35:20 7/13/02(442)

For your reference: lvm 15:59:36 7/13/02(781)

Thank you, Teacher! 3193 08:34:43 7/14/02(369)

You cannot stop halfway. If you are to stop, you can only stop the mad mind. lvm 11:10:46 7/14/02(198)

If one merely keeps stopping without end, does that count as an “insight”? 3193 14:49:58 7/14/02(no content)

To stop suddenly is itself the insight. Where does this “merely keep stopping” come from? lvm 15:19:49 7/14/02(no content)

Wonderful! Stop, and that is all. If there is still a “merely,” then you are again attached to stopping. 3193 15:44:23 7/14/02(no content)

Thank you for the instruction. yzhj01 08:38:36 7/13/02(no content)

Go away! No, no. Bag 12:41:51 7/13/02(no content)

Is it a bag with its opening sealed shut, less useful than a scarf? yzhj01 09:40:13 7/14/02(no content)

You bag—knowing full well that I am lazy, you still insist on speaking so obscurely. yzhj01 12:46:22 7/13/02(no content)

Fifty-Nine: Only Thus Is It Attained

[Original Koan]

One day, Yuanwu went to the head seat’s quarters and, speaking of Elder Miyin, said: “Four years ago, when I saw him, he was just like this. Even when he came to Jinshan and ascended the seat, he was still just like this. He makes one round, then another round—going on without stopping. How can one guide people in this way? It is like bringing in a cartload of precious swords: he draws one out, then draws out another, wanting only to bring them all out. If he had true skill, he would take up one sword and kill with it. Why keep bringing them out merely to play with them?”

At the time, a monk who heard this said to the master: “A few days ago, when I read his recorded informal talks, I knew that this man’s practice is ordinarily very refined. That is why, before the assembly, he keeps wanting to pour everything out—one passage after another, unwilling to stop.”

The master said: “It is not so. When a dragon obtains only half a bowl of water, it can raise clouds and breathe forth mist, sending down abundant rain. Why should it keep rolling about in the ocean, saying, ‘I have so much water’? Again, a person skilled in killing in battle holds a spear; as soon as he sees the enemy’s horse, he knows which one is his. He steps forward, kills the enemy with one thrust, leaps onto the horse’s back, and rides on to kill. It must be like this.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

One day, Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu spoke with Dahui Zonggao, the head seat, about Elder Miyin.

He said that Elder Miyin merely kept making one round after another, never stopping. He knew only how to let things go, not how to draw them in. How could he guide people in this way? It was like hauling in a cartload of precious swords: taking out one sword and playing with it, then taking out another and continuing to play. If he truly had the skill, he would pick up one sword and kill with it. Why would he keep brandishing the swords one by one? Yuanwu meant that Elder Miyin was like a lion that does not pounce on people but merely shakes out its mane. That is, he only displayed his own understanding, rather than responding to students' capacities and instructing them accordingly.

At that time, a monk who had heard Yuanwu's remarks said to Dahui Zonggao: "I have read Elder Miyin's recorded informal talks. His practice is very refined! That is why he wants to bring it all out and explain it to everyone, speaking eloquently, one passage after another."

Dahui Zonggao disagreed with the monk's view: "One cannot teach Chan from the Dharma seat in this way. For example, a dragon that governs the rain need only obtain half a bowl of water; it should then raise clouds and breathe forth mist, sending down sweet rain everywhere. If the dragon merely makes waves in the ocean and flaunts how much water it has, what use is that? Again, one who truly understands warfare takes up a spear and goes into battle. At the first sight of the enemy, he knows to kill the foe. He cannot simply keep displaying his skill with the spear; he must kill the enemy with a single thrust."

The metaphors used by the master and disciple, Foguo and Dahui, both refer to using the sword of prajñā wisdom to dispel students' confusion and cut off their afflictions. Both were exceptionally rare great spiritual teachers, skilled in guiding students. Their lineage has continued to the present day, with disciples everywhere.

Sixty: Faith and Understanding Thus

[Original Koan]

In the assembly of Chan Master Zhishou of Dayu, a monk recited the Diamond Sūtra one hundred times each day.

When Zhishou heard of this, he had an attendant invite him over and asked, "I hear that you recite the Diamond Sūtra one hundred times each day. Is that so?"

The monk replied, "Yes."

Zhishou said, “Have you ever investigated the meaning of the sūtra?”

The monk replied, “No.”

Zhishou said, “Simply recite it once each day, but investigate the Buddha’s meaning. If you awaken through a single sentence, it is like drinking a drop of seawater and thereby knowing the flavor of all the hundred rivers.”

The monk followed these instructions. One day, as he recited the passage, “One should know thus, see thus, and understand through faith thus, without giving rise to dharma-marks,” he suddenly had an awakening and went to report it to Zhishou. Zhishou immediately pointed to a dog lying before his bed and said, “The dog?”

The monk was speechless, so Zhishou struck him and drove him out.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

At the monastery of Chan Master Shouzhi on Dayu Mountain in Ruizhou, a monk recited the Diamond Sūtra one hundred times every day. Dayu Zhishou asked him, “Have you ever investigated the meaning of the Diamond Sūtra?” The monk replied, “No.” It turned out that, without regard for its meaning, he merely recited it over and over. At most, this could count as the hearing of “hearing, contemplating, cultivating, and realizing”; he had not even contemplated it, much less cultivated it.

Chan Master Dayu Zhishou told him, “Recite it only once each day, but investigate the meaning of the sūtra. Once you awaken through a single sentence, it is like drinking a drop of seawater and thereby knowing the flavor of all the hundred rivers.” This was not only to teach him to move from hearing into contemplation; more importantly, it was to teach him to “awaken.” Only cultivation after awakening is true cultivation. The weight of Master Zhishou’s words lay in the latter half: he wished to inspire him to awaken.

But the monk remembered only the first half and began reasoning about its principles. One day, when he came to the passage, “One should know thus, see thus, and understand through faith thus, without giving rise to dharma-marks,” he suddenly had an insight. He then went to see Chan Master Dayu Zhishou and report the principle he had understood from reading the sūtra. A dog happened to be lying before Master Zhishou’s bed. Pointing at it, Zhishou asked, “The dog?” The principles the monk had been reasoning about were abruptly interrupted. This was precisely an excellent opportunity to recognize his original nature, but he was “speechless” and let it slip past him before his very eyes.

In investigating Chan, one must be neither too rigid nor too facile. If one is too rigid, it is easy to miss it right before one’s eyes and be unable to seize it directly. If one is too facile, it is easy to mistake light and shadow for the real thing or to fall into

concepts. Seeing that this monk was too rigid, Master Zhishou struck him and drove him out. A Chan master's staff has eyes at its tip; he never strikes people carelessly. Having received the staff today, this monk may yet come alive in the future.

Sixty-One: Five Pecks of Rice Are Cooked

[Original Text of the Koan]

The Master said: "In investigating Chan, one need not claim, merely because one has sharp repartee, 'I am right.' In the past, Master Zhi of Yungai had a clear eye of the Way. When the prefect entered the mountains and rested in the Pavilion for Discussing Emptiness, he asked, 'What is the Pavilion for Discussing Emptiness?' Zhi said, 'It is simply the Pavilion for Discussing Emptiness.' The prefect was displeased, so he raised the question with Mugu Ben, who said, 'Let the pavilion itself expound the Dharma—why use the mouth to discuss emptiness?' The prefect was then pleased and appointed Ben to reside at Yungai. Yet, compared with Zhi, Ben was far inferior. Thus we know that genuine attainment cannot be judged by clever repartee."

Yuan, the head-seat monk of Baofeng, was likewise a man of realization. Yet he was slow and dull in answering questions, so Juefan nicknamed him "Yuan Five-Dou." That is, after opening his mouth to draw a breath, he would take as long as it took to cook five dou of rice before he could offer a turning word.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said: Those who investigate Chan must understand that, when sharp repartee surges forth, they need not suppose themselves right and others wrong. In former times, Master Zhi of Yungai had a clear eye of the Way. When the local prefect made a pilgrimage to the mountain to offer incense, Master Zhi accompanied him as he rested at the Pavilion for Discussing Emptiness. The prefect asked, "What is the Pavilion for Discussing Emptiness?" Master Zhi replied: It is simply the Pavilion for Discussing Emptiness.

The prefect disliked the answer and became unhappy. He then asked Chan Master Mugu Ben, "What is the Pavilion for Discussing Emptiness?" Master Ben replied, "Let the pavilion itself expound the Dharma—why use the mouth to discuss emptiness?" The prefect found this answer pleasing and had Master Ben take charge of the Yungai practice center. In fact, Master Ben's depth of realization was far inferior to Master Zhi's. Therefore, a person's genuine depth of realization cannot be measured with the ruler of "clever repartee."

Here is another example: Yuan, the head-seat monk of Baofeng, was a man of the Way with substantial realization, but he was very slow in answering questions. Hong Juefan gave him the nickname “Yuan Five-Dou.” This meant that he took as long as it would take to cook five dou of rice before he could offer a turning word.

Clever repartee belongs to language, whereas depth of realization is originally formless. Of course, one cannot use the form of language to gauge formless realization. Clever repartee is like fine calligraphy: one cannot say that a person whose handwriting is good must therefore possess a high level of education. Yet, whether one’s education is extensive or not, after hearing this, there is no need deliberately to make one’s handwriting very poor. ^o^

Since it takes as long as cooking five dou of rice, why do all the masters say, “Speak quickly, speak quickly”!? Qinglong 11:12:25 7/18/02 (No content)

Even cooking five dou of rice may be called quick. lvm 11:22:46 7/18/02 (62)

Chan is direct and straightforward, so attaining realization is indeed quick; it is simply that people love to create karma and take the wrong path. Qinglong 11:25:45 7/18/02 (No content)

Since you are a green dragon, do not forget to bring rain. Then the road will not be wrong. lvm 11:29:43 7/18/02 (No content)

Thank you for the reminder, Teacher. This is all the “ability” I have (a colloquial term for nasal tears:). Qinglong 11:33:35 7/18/02 (No content)

What? A stream of dream talk—fools talking of dreams. Chiren Shuomeng 11:29:12 7/18/02 (No content)

Go home, eat, then sleep—comfortable.) Bye-bye. Qinglong 11:34:41 7/18/02 (No content)

Looking only at the replies: Zhi’s words are plain and unadorned, yet wisdom-light shines through them secretly; Ben’s words are elegant and charming, but regrettably lack substance and are not a Chan practitioner’s proper duty. Chiren Shuomeng 10:54:32 7/18/02 (432)

Of course! Was this not already said? lvm 11:09:20 7/18/02 (83)

Yes! One absolutely must not be too "honest"! 1 Chiren Shuomeng 11:15:51 7/18/02 (No content)

^o^ lvm 11:24:07 7/18/02 (No content)

This koan should make us vigilant whenever we exchange views concerning the mind-ground and understanding! Daizi 18:57:23 7/17/02 (395)

Yes. 99477 10:24:14 7/18/02 (No content)

Of course! Of course! It should indeed be so. lvm 19:50:32 7/17/02 (No content)

Sixty-Two: What Is the Buddha?

[Original Text of the Koan]

The Master said: “People nowadays know only how to accord with inverted views; they do not know how to accord with correct principle. When asked, ‘What is Buddha?’ one says, ‘Mind itself is Buddha,’ yet they take this as ordinary. But when asked, ‘What is Buddha?’ one says, ‘A lantern climbs the wall to Tiantai,’ and they call it extraordinary. Is this not according with inverted views?”

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said: “People nowadays know only how to accord with inverted views; they do not know how to accord with correct principle. When someone asks, ‘What is Buddha?’ and one answers, ‘Mind itself is Buddha,’ he takes it as ordinary. But if one answers, ‘A lantern climbs the wall to Tiantai,’ he says that this is good, that this reply is extraordinary. Is this not according with inverted views?”

In the doctrinal teachings, rely on the meaning, not on the words; in the Chan school, answers address the mind, not the words. Having read this koan, do not suppose that Chan Master Dahui wished to establish the saying “Mind itself is Buddha.” See how Chan Master Dingxu of Xichan, who thoroughly understood the circumstances surrounding “Mind itself is Buddha,” was disciplined by Chan Master Dahui:

Miaoxi (that is, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao) cited: “A monk asked Mazu, ‘What is Buddha?’ The Patriarch said, ‘Mind itself is Buddha.’ How do you understand this?” The Master (Chan Master Dingxu of Xichan) gave an answer. Miaoxi rebuked him, saying: “With an understanding such as yours, how dare you rashly set yourself up as a teacher of others?” He struck the drum and gave a public discourse, exposing what the Master had cherished throughout his life as the source of his strength, and condemning it as a mistaken understanding. Tears streamed down the Master’s cheeks, and he did not dare raise his eyes. Silently, he thought: “What I have attained has already been rejected. Could the untransmitted purport brought from the West extend beyond this alone?” He then placed himself among Miaoxi’s disciples.

One day, Miaoxi asked: “Do not let anything out from within; do not let anything in from without. At just such a time, what is it?” As the Master was about to open his mouth, Miaoxi picked up a bamboo staff and struck him three times across the back in succession. At this, the Master had a great awakening and shouted sternly: “Reverend, you have already done too much!” Miaoxi struck him once more, and the Master bowed. Miaoxi smiled and said: “Only today do I know that I have not deceived you.” He then confirmed him with this verse: “Upon the crown of the head stands the eye of Yāmāhī; slanting behind the elbow hangs the life-taking talisman. Blind the eye, cast off the talisman—on Zhaozhou’s eastern wall hangs a gourd.”

Ha, ha! How far apart are “on Zhaozhou’s eastern wall hangs a gourd” and “a lantern climbs the wall to Tiantai”?

Do not be misled by a Chan master’s words; they are all intended to correct deviations. If there is no deviation to correct, not a single dharma is established.

[Related Links] (Click: Close/Open) [Related Links] (Click: Close/Open) [Related Links] (Click: Close/Open)

Watch the animation of Master Miaoxi and Chan Master Dingxu of Xichan—wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful! Fool Talking in Dreams 11:52:17 7/18/02 (493)

“A lantern climbs the wall to Tiantai” is the riddle; a Kongming lantern is the answer. Hehe, amusing. Azure Dragon 11:10:30 7/18/02 (no content)

What is the answer to the riddle “on Zhaozhou’s eastern wall hangs a gourd”? lvm 11:14:44 7/18/02 (no content)

Teacher Wushengyuan taught me how to say it. Azure Dragon 11:16:30 7/18/02 (no content)

Say it like this: lvm 11:20:01 7/18/02 (40)

One scoops fire for the eastern household; one weighs emptiness for the western household. Azure Dragon 11:23:02 7/18/02 (no content)

63. A Fist Touching the Back

[Original Koan Text]

The master said: “Zhang Wujin met Yue of Doushuai, yet ridiculed Huitang. He composed this verse: ‘Long had I heard of the dragon in Huanglong Mountain; / When I arrived, I found only an old mountain dweller. / Know that beyond turning away from and touching upon the fist, / There is another point of numinous understanding.’ At the time, all quarters praised it. Later, when this mountain monk

came to see its meaning, I regretted that Wujin was already dead. He said, ‘Know that beyond turning away from and touching upon the fist, / There is another point of numinous understanding.’ If one seeks to understand Huitang through this verse, is one not far off indeed?”

Chan Master Lingyuan once composed this eulogy: “Three questions overthrow by reversal, surpassing the profound workings at Vulture Peak; one fist held forth in demonstration reveals the naked reality at Dragon Peak. Before hearing it, one is wealthy; after seeing it, one is poor. In old age, singing loudly, he delights in returning home—let people call him an old mountain dweller if they wish.”

Huang Luzhi heard this and laughed, saying: “What Wujin calls ‘a point of numinous understanding’ is like Laju making ear holes in empty space. Lingyuan’s eulogy clears away this injustice; it is like writing a character without making a single stroke.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

This koan involves quite a number of people. Let us first look at a lineage chart:

Grand Historian Huang Tingjian (Huang Luzhi)

Huanglong Huinan Huanglong Zuxin (Huitang) Lingyuan Weiqing (Chan Master Lingyuan)

Shishuang Chuyuan Zhenjing Kewen Doushuai Congyue Chancellor Zhang Shangying (Zhang Wujin)

Yangqi Fanghui Baiyun Shouduan Wuzu Fayan Yuanwu Keqin Dahui Zonggao

Layman Wujin ridiculed Huitang, composing this verse: “Long had I heard of the dragon in Huanglong Mountain; when I arrived, I found only an old mountain dweller. Know that beyond turning away from and touching upon the fist, there is another point of numinous understanding.”

Chan Master Lingyuan praised Huitang, composing this verse: “Three questions overthrow by reversal, surpassing the profound workings at Vulture Peak; one fist held forth in demonstration reveals the naked reality at Dragon Peak. Before hearing it, one is wealthy; after seeing it, one is poor. In old age, singing loudly, he delights in returning home—let people call him an old mountain dweller if they wish.”

The fact that both verses contain the three characters “old mountain dweller” shows that the first verse came earlier and the latter was composed later; the latter is directly opposed to the former. What we now need to understand is the meaning of

“three questions overthrow by reversal,” “one fist held forth in demonstration,” and “turning away from and touching upon the fist.”

“Three questions overthrow by reversal” is also called the “Three Barriers of Huanglong.” Chan Master Huanglong Huinan would often ask monks in his room: “Everyone has the conditions of birth. Where are your conditions of birth, Venerable?” Just as the question and answer were being exchanged, he would suddenly extend his hand and say: “How is my hand like the Buddha’s hand?” Then he would ask about the teachings sought and received from various masters, and suddenly lower his foot, saying: “How is my foot like a donkey’s foot?” For more than thirty years, he presented these three questions, yet none of the students could accord with their intent. Occasionally someone would answer, but the master never affirmed or denied it. The Chan monasteries called them the “Three Barriers of Huanglong.” Master Nan composed the following verses:

Individual verses:

“Everyone understands talk of the conditions of birth, but when has a jellyfish ever been able to leave the shrimp? One sees only the sun rise in the east—who can still drink Zhaozhou’s tea?”

“My hand and the Buddha’s hand are raised together; Chan practitioners should directly grasp this. Without stirring weapons of war, the Way is spoken forth; right here, one transcends Buddhas and patriarchs.”

“My foot and the donkey’s foot proceed together; every step treads upon the unborn. When one understands clouds gathering and the sun drawing in its rays, only then does one know the free range of this Way.”

Combined verse:

“Where the conditions of birth are cut off, the donkey’s foot extends; when the donkey’s foot extends, the Buddha’s hand opens. To inform practitioners who travel the five lakes: each of the three barriers must be thoroughly penetrated.”

“One fist held forth in demonstration” and “turning away from and touching upon the fist” are the same matter. Chan Master Huanglong Zuxin, Huitang, would often raise a fist and ask monks in his room: “If you call it a fist, you touch upon it; if you do not call it a fist, you turn away from it. What do you call it?” The students were at a loss.

By no mere coincidence, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao also often used this device, though he was able to hook one or two quick-witted fellows:

Once, holding up a bamboo stick, he asked a monk: “If you call it a bamboo stick, you touch upon it; if you do not call it a bamboo stick, you turn away from it. You may not speak, and you may not remain silent. Speak quickly! Speak quickly!” The monk said, “Please put down the bamboo stick, Master, and then I will answer you.” The master put it down, and the monk flicked his sleeves and departed. The master said, “Attendant, take note of this monk.”

On another occasion, he posed the same question to a monk. The monk said, “Are you afraid that a turtle will escape from the jar?” The master stepped down from the Chan seat, seized him, and said, “Whose words are these? Speak quickly!” The monk said, “I truly dare not deceive you, Master. Chan Master Zhu’an taught me to answer in this way.” The master struck him several times with his staff and said, “Make this clearly known to all quarters.”

Since one need not fear that a turtle will escape from the jar, let us ask: where is the other “point of numinous understanding” beyond turning away from and touching upon the fist? Therefore, Dahui Zonggao held that Zhang Wujin did not understand Huitang’s meaning; his understanding was far too distant from Huitang’s. By the time Dahui saw Zhang Wujin’s verse, Zhang was already dead. Otherwise, however much “all quarters praised it,” Dahui would have sought Zhang Wujin out to argue the matter with him.

Having heard the two verses above, Huang Luzhi commented: “What Wujin calls ‘a point of numinous understanding’ is like Laju making ear holes in empty space. Lingyuan’s eulogy clears away this injustice; it is like writing a character without making a single stroke.”

Perhaps some part of the plant called laju resembles an ear. Huang Luzhi’s criticism that Zhang Wujin was “making ear holes in empty space” means that Zhang’s phrase, “There is another point of numinous understanding,” amounts to putting a head on top of one’s head and making a mystery of the mysterious. At the same time, Huang praised Chan Master Lingyuan’s verse for clearing away the injustice done to Huitang. The lines, “Before hearing it, one is wealthy; after seeing it, one is poor,”

and “In old age, singing loudly, he delights in returning home—let people call him an old mountain dweller if they wish,” vividly portray a character written without any strokes at all. This praises Huitang’s demonstration of “turning away from and touching upon the fist,” which has fully revealed the formless yet numinously aware Buddha-nature. The “point of numinous understanding” is not outside turning away from and touching upon the fist.

What does it mean for a fist to be apart from a fist? Qinglong 11:00:25 7/18/02 (no content)

Holding one hand up to the empty sky, fist touches fist~ Shancai 23:41:59 7/18/02 (no content)

With that question from you, Huitang's fist can no longer be clenched. lvm 11:06:34 7/18/02 (no content)

Teacher, are you holding it up for Brother Long to see? Chiren Shuomeng 11:10:15 7/18/02 (no content)

Hey, what is all this about fists? Have you heard of the master's cruel method of probing with a knife and severing a finger? Qinglong 11:15:08 7/18/02 (no content)

Brother Long is called a fist! ^-^ Chiren Shuomeng 11:18:17 7/18/02 (no content)

Wrong. Qinglong 11:19:42 7/18/02 (no content)

Turn back, turn back. Chiren Shuomeng 11:23:13 7/18/02 (no content)

That is against your conscience. Qinglong 11:27:31 7/18/02 (no content)

Before the fist has been understood, conscience appears again—haha. Chiren Shuomeng 11:30:05 7/18/02 (no content)

Haha, you are confused. Qinglong 11:34:03 7/18/02 (no content)

Brother Long, be careful. Shancai 01:18:23 7/19/02 (64)

Haha, I will follow Elder Brother Shan. Qinglong 07:44:40 7/19/02 (no content)

^o^ Shancai 21:31:04 7/20/02 (no content)

Haha! It cannot be clenched. lvm 11:11:45 7/18/02 (no content)

Hehe, shouldn't it be that it cannot be spread open? Chiren Shuomeng 11:13:53 7/18/02 (no content)

Extending his palm, he said: lvm 11:18:15 7/18/02 (90)

:) Liberation 20:06:09 7/25/02 (no content)

Raising one palm, he answered... Withered Tree Blossoms 22:57:54 7/18/02 (28)

A handshake, with respectful greetings! Shancai 22:44:59 7/18/02 (12)

~0~ Chiren Shuomeng 11:20:47 7/18/02 (17)

Old Master Huitang must also have flicked his sleeves and returned to the abbot's quarters. Qinglong 11:09:18 7/18/02 (no content)

^o^ lvm 11:10:02 7/18/02 (no content)

Sixty-Four: So That's How It Is

[Original Koan]

The Fifth Patriarch said: "People of the three vehicles escape from the prison of the three realms. Those of the lesser fruits must rely on expedient means, such as tunneling through the ground, breaking through a wall, or climbing out through a skylight. Only bodhisattvas who have realized the Way, from the moment they first enter the prison, arouse no suspicion in the prison guards; everything remains as usual. One day, they send out a message, obtain wine and meat, and give them to the guards until they are thoroughly drunk. They take the guards' clothes, leg bindings, and headcloths and put them on themselves. Then they put their own ragged clothes on the guards, place the cangue around the guards' necks, and leave them sitting in the prison. Taking the guards' rattan whips in their own hands, they openly walk out through the main gate. Those who practice Chan must be like this."

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

So this is how easy it is!

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

People of the three vehicles are śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas.

The lesser fruits refer to śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

To tunnel through the ground, break through a wall, or climb out through a skylight is to leave clear traces of liberation behind.

"Prison guards" refers to the warders who guard a prison. They symbolize the delusions of views, the delusions of thought, dust-like delusions, and the delusions of ignorance. Like prison guards, these afflictions bind us, causing us to shut ourselves away, obscuring our Buddha-nature and depriving us of freedom.

This analogy by Chan Master Wuzu Fayan is interesting to read. The Elder praised it, saying, "So this is how easy it is!" Below, the Fifth Patriarch's analogy is correlated, point by point, with the Tiantai school's Six Identities with Buddhahood, as an offering to all:

"From the moment they first enter the prison, they arouse no suspicion in the prison guards; everything remains as usual." — Buddhahood in Principle:

In movement and stillness, principle is wholly present; in activity and repose, all phenomena are entirely absent. Silently, they follow things along; dimly, they do not know how to return.

“One day, they send out a message, obtain wine and meat, and give them to the guards until they are thoroughly drunk.” — Buddhahood in Name:

Only now do I hear the song of the unborn; only now do I hear the deathless hymn. Now I know that this very reality is so; instead, I regret having squandered my time.

“They take the guards’ clothes, leg bindings, and headcloths and put them on themselves.” — Buddhahood in Contemplative Practice:

Thought after thought illuminates the constant principle; mind after mind brings illusory dust to rest. Contemplating the nature of all dharmas everywhere, there is neither the false nor the true.

“Then they put their own ragged clothes on the guards, place the cangue around the guards’ necks, and leave them sitting in the prison.” — Buddhahood in Resemblance:

Though the four abiding delusions have first fallen away, the six sense objects have not yet become wholly empty. There is still a cataract in the eye; in empty space, red flowers are seen.

“Taking the guards’ rattan whips in their own hands, they openly walk out through the main gate.” — Buddhahood through Partial Realization:

Suddenly the mind opens in awakening, and all is lucidly penetrated. Yet the source has not been exhausted; the moon is still seen through a haze.

“Those who practice Chan must be like this.” — Ultimate Buddhahood:

What has always been true is itself delusion; today, all delusions are true. One need only return to one’s original nature; not a single dharma is new.

Go one step further: there is no need to go out. Jieyuan 23:01:03 7/26/02 (157)

Great wisdom, great courage, great practice. Shancai 23:19:56 7/21/02 (no content)

May I ask the teacher: what does “tunneling through the ground, breaking through a wall, or climbing out through a skylight” mean? yzhj01 08:05:02 7/19/02 (no content)

Digging a way out through holes at the upper, middle, and lower levels. lvm 08:17:56 7/19/02 (36)

Discussing my reflections with Brother [haha] on “Valuing Cause and Effect: Three Awakenings and Reflections” — Zhongbushuo 11:51:51 7/22/02|09 (6K)

Last night, I awoke from a dream; today… — chen 17:52:52 7/22/02|(35)

Using this passage to explain case 64 of The Chan School Armory is excellent: — lvm 12:37:47 7/22/02|09 (342)

^o^ — Zhongbushuo 16:31:14 7/22/02| (no content)

Sixty-Five: The Fifth Patriarch’s Fever and Chills

[Original Text of the Koan]

The Fifth Patriarch said: “People in the world are like those with malaria: first a bout of chills, then a bout of fever. Unaware, they pass their whole lives this way.”

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

“A bout of chills, a bout of fever” means a period of cold followed by a period of heat. Cold refers to bitter cold and symbolizes the suffering retribution of the world; when suffering reaches its extreme, one is reborn in the hells. Heat refers to warmth and symbolizes worldly blessed retribution; when blessings reach their extreme, one is reborn in the heavenly realms.

Chan Master Fayan, the Fifth Patriarch, does not use the word “warmth,” but “heat,” in order to emphasize that even the blessings of the heavenly realms are suffering—because they are impermanent. A period of cold, a period of heat: impermanence! It is like suffering from malaria; this is the suffering of illness. To cure this illness, one must find a physician: the Buddha is the great King of Physicians. In the hope of recovery, one must take good medicine: the Dharma is agada medicine. To seek medical treatment, one should consult the community: the Saṅgha is the community of liberation.

For disciples of the Vajrayāna, the root guru embodies the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha; one should rely upon them with utmost sincerity.

Homage to the root guru, Acharya Yuanyin!

Homage to the root guru, Acharya Yuanyin! Junior Dharma Brother 08:04:28 7/20/02 (no content)

Sixty-Six: Exquisite Methods

[Original Koan Text]

Magistrate Fan, known as the Daoist Jishou, visited Foguo in Chengdu. Foguo instructed him to investigate: “Not mind, not Buddha, not a thing—what is it?” He was not to offer an explanation or open his mouth.

He investigated it over and over, but found no entry point. Becoming distressed, he asked Foguo, “Is there any expedient means apart from this that would enable me to understand?”

Foguo said, “There is an expedient means: not mind, not Buddha, not a thing.”

At these words, Jishou had an insight and said, “It turns out it was so close.”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

An incomparably marvelous way of receiving and guiding people!

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

There was a county magistrate surnamed Fan, who called himself the Daoist Jishou. He came to Chengdu to study Chan with Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu Keqin. Foguo told him to investigate the following gong’an of “Not mind, not Buddha, not a thing”:“

Nanquan Puyuan, the teacher of Chan Master Zhaozhou Congshen, would sometimes say: “Mazu of Jiangxi says, ‘Mind itself is Buddha.’ But this old teacher does not speak that way: ‘Not mind, not Buddha, not a thing.’ Is there any fault in speaking this way?” Zhaozhou bowed and withdrew.

At the time, a monk followed him and asked Zhaozhou, “You bowed and then withdrew. What was your meaning?” Zhaozhou replied, “You should ask the master.” The monk then asked Nanquan, “What was Venerable Shen’s meaning just now?” The master said, “He understood this old monk’s intent.”

Ha, ha! “Bowing and withdrawing” is itself understanding. If one were to utter the word “understanding,” one would already have missed “not mind, not Buddha, not a thing.” Look:

In his room, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao asked a monk, “Not mind, not Buddha, not a thing—how do you understand this?” The monk said, “I understand.” The master said, “Understand your seven generations of ancestral spirits in your house!” The monk gave a shout. The master said, “Just now you understood, and now you shout—what does that have to do with ‘not mind, not Buddha, not a thing’?” The monk had nothing to say, and the master struck him and drove him out.

Now let us look at another disciple of Chan Master Dahui Zonggao, the lay practitioner Wu Weiming, who held the office of judicial commissioner, and see how he understood it:

Judicial Commissioner Wu composed this verse: “Not mind, not Buddha, not a thing — / The whole body is a set of golden-lock bones. / Zhaozhou personally saw old Nanquan / And could say that Zhenzhou produces radishes.”

Dahui confirmed him with this verse: “The whole body is a set of golden-lock bones, / Fit to serve as a model for humans and devas. / If you wish to know Linji’s little attendant, / He is that old white-handed thief!”

Turning back to Magistrate Fan, when he investigated this gong’an, he found no way in. Why was there no way in? Because he could not leave behind conceptual thought.

He became deeply distressed and, unable to wait, hurried to ask Foguo: “Is there any other expedient Dharma gate that would enable me to understand?” Foguo said, “There is indeed an expedient means . . .” Magistrate Fan then focused his attention, waiting to hear what would follow. Foguo said, “Not mind, not Buddha, not a thing.” At that instant, Magistrate Fan’s stream of successive thoughts was cut off, and the original radiant light of “not mind, not Buddha, not a thing” appeared clearly before him. He suddenly understood: “It turns out it was so close!”

Which worldly person does not abandon what is near to seek what is distant, chasing after things thought after thought, and thereby conjure up the endless bitter sea of rebirth? When, exhausted by that bitter sea, they seek liberation with determination, they still cannot escape their habitual tendency to abandon what is near and seek what is distant, chasing after things thought after thought. They may even fall into the “deep pit of liberation” and be unable to pull themselves out.

How it taxed World-Honored Śākyamuni, who did not spare even his eyebrows, to set forth in accord with people’s capacities the Tripiṭaka and twelve divisions of scripture, the course of mind through three great asaṃkhyeya kalpas, the fruition of realization through the three worthy stages and ten bhūmis, and eighty-four thousand gates of antidotal practice. If one could immediately extinguish the frenzied mind, why would the World-Honored One need to set these forth? Patriarch Linji was the same: he had no choice but to set forth, in accord with people’s capacities, the Three Mysteries and Three Essentials, the fourfold host and guest, and so forth.

Dahui’s calling Linji a “white-handed thief” shows that he truly understood Linji’s painstaking intent and truly knew how to repay the patriarch’s kindness. As for this Magistrate Fan, had he not encountered Foguo, he would have missed this life.

Likewise, if we had not encountered the Elder, we too could hardly avoid missing this life.

The Elder praised Foguo: “An incomparably marvelous way of receiving and guiding people!”—He accurately recognized the moment and immediately cut off the student’s conceptual thought, giving him the opportunity to see Buddha-nature directly. This is indeed an incomparably marvelous way of receiving and guiding people.

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It turns out this fellow also knows how to saw apart a scale weight. Shancai 23:17:35 7/21/02 (no content)

^o^ lvm 08:20:08 7/22/02 (no content)

67. Unifying the Three Vehicles into One

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Doushuai Yue was head monk at Qixian on Mount Lu. At that time, Xiong Botong, the commander of Hongzhou, invited him to serve as abbot of Long’an Doushuai.

Yue posed three questions to test students:

First: “Clearing away the weeds and investigating the mystery is solely for the sake of seeing one’s nature. Where, at this very moment, is your nature?”

Second: “Only upon recognizing one’s own nature can one be liberated from birth and death. When the light of your eyes falls to the ground, how will you be liberated?”

Third: “Once liberated from birth and death, one knows where one is going. When the four elements separate, where do you go?”

Wujin composed three verses in reply:

The first says: “In the dark, dense summer woods, cuckoos cry; the sun breaks through drifting clouds, and heaven and earth are clear. Do not ask Zeng Can about Zeng Xi; filial sons have always avoided speaking their fathers’ names.”

The second says: “In the human world, the messengers of ghosts arrive with their summons; in heaven, the color of flower crowns is already fading. What a fine

moment to turn around! Do not let old Yama know of it lightly."

The third says: "Funeral drums sound for Li Da of the eastern village; in the western wind, tears soak her robes in the open fields. On the southern bank of a Jiangnan river, amid green reeds and red smartweed, he has become Zhang San, seated leisurely on a fishing rock."

Yue lived at Doushuai for five years. One day he spoke this verse: "Forty-eight: sages and ordinary beings are all slain. If you are no hero, the road to Long'an is slippery." He then passed away peacefully.

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

Combining the three questions into a separate verse: "Coming and going at ease, entering and leaving without hindrance. Originally dust, carefree beyond worldly dharmas."

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

When Chan Master Yue was head monk at Qixian Monastery on Mount Lu, the local official Xiong Botong invited him to become abbot of Long'an Doushuai Chan Monastery. Five years later, Chan Master Doushuai Congyue left behind a verse and entered nirvāṇa. The verse says: "Forty-eight: sages and ordinary beings are all slain. If you are no hero, the road to Long'an is slippery."

Chan Master Doushuai Congyue once posed three questions to test practitioners. His disciple, the layman Wujin, composed three verses in answer to them:

First question: "Clearing away the weeds and investigating the mystery is solely for the sake of seeing one's nature. Where, at this very moment, is your nature?"

First answer: "In the dark, dense summer woods, cuckoos cry; the sun breaks through drifting clouds, and heaven and earth are clear. Do not ask Zeng Can about Zeng Xi; filial sons have always avoided speaking their fathers' names."

Zeng Can's father was named Zeng Xi. Just as people of old avoided directly uttering the revered names of their elders, what person who has seen his nature would proclaim that he has seen his nature? Among the 1,700 koans, is there any example of such a claim? You should know that the moment one makes such a claim, distinctions of sage and ordinary person, high and low, arise; one has already fallen into conceptuality.

Once there is something to fall upon, it is no longer it. If the seed of self-conceit sprouts again, one is headed for demonic states! This taboo is called the "present taboo" in the Caodong school. Not to mention this; even teachings that come close

to it were excluded by Chan Master Caoshan. Listen to Chan Master Caoshan's "Verse on the Four Prohibitions": "Do not travel the road where the mind operates; do not put on the garment of original nature. Why insist on being precisely thus? Above all, avoid the time before birth."

Where is one's nature? Nature is in its functioning! The dense, cool forest in summer and the calling of cuckoos are all functions of nature. If you can see it in this way, it is like the sun breaking through drifting clouds: heaven and earth become wholly clear and peaceful.

During one's lifetime, set a definite time and persist without letup, so as to open up what is original. See one's nature before death. This is called "attaining realization within a fixed period." Only thus does one not live one's life in vain. The ancients said: "If one hears the Way in the morning, one may die content in the evening."

Second question: "Only upon recognizing one's own nature can one be liberated from birth and death. When the light of your eyes falls to the ground, how will you be liberated?"

Second answer: "In the human world, the messengers of ghosts arrive with their summons; in heaven, the color of flower crowns is already fading. What a fine moment to turn around! Do not let old Yama know of it lightly."

When the light of the eyes falls to the ground, the signs of death have appeared. By then, the three flowers atop a deva's head have withered, the armpits sweat and smell foul, and one no longer delights in one's seat. A human life span has ended; Yama's messengers arrive bearing their summons; and the four elements separate one by one. It is plain to see that one cannot remain alive.

Then where does one go? Layman Wujin calls this "a fine moment to turn around." At this moment, one can turn around, let go completely, and directly attain nirvāṇa. Consider how he himself turned around at that very time: In the fourth year of Xuanhe, at dawn in the eleventh month, he dictated his final memorial and ordered his sons and younger kinsmen to write it down. Shortly afterward, he took up his pillow and threw it against the door and window, producing a sound like thunder. When those present looked, he had already died. What a fine "Do not let old Yama know of it lightly"—he truly had such assurance!

At the time of death, one has one's own assurance and does not drift with the flow of birth and death. This is called "attaining realization in this very life."

Third question: "Once liberated from birth and death, one knows where one is going. When the four elements separate, where do you go?"

Third answer: “Funeral drums sound for Li Da of the eastern village; in the western wind, tears soak her robes in the open fields. On the southern bank of a Jiangnan river, amid green reeds and red smartweed, he has become Zhang San, seated leisurely on a fishing rock.”

Li Da of the eastern village has died. His wife has suddenly lost the one on whom she depended and is overcome with grief. Facing the bitter west wind, she weeps and weeps in the graveyard out in the open fields, heartbroken beyond measure.

The dull funeral drums, joined by the piercing cries of grief, tell of birth, old age, sickness, and death—the great sea of suffering! Reeds turn yellow and then green, green and then yellow; smartweed blossoms fall and then bloom red, bloom red and then fall.... Many years later, on the southern bank of this river amid green reeds and red smartweed, a young Zhang San sits leisurely fishing. He is Li Da reborn.

If Li Da’s wife were still alive, even on seeing this Zhang San, the old woman would not connect him with Li Da. Zhang San does not know whence birth comes, just as Li Da did not know whither death goes. Ah, stop there! We always speak of “originally no self” as a principle. Now, in light of this example, say a word for him: in the end, is Zhang San the self, or is Li Da the self?

When the four elements separate, where do they go? Some Zhang San, some Li Si! We must not forget one further link—the intermediate-state body. During the intermediate state, do not be deluded by circumstances; then one may be liberated from the sea of suffering and be reborn in the Pure Land. If, during the intermediate state, one can maintain mastery of oneself and correspond with the Buddha-light, one immediately attains liberation. This is called “attaining realization in the intermediate state.”

The Elder considered Layman Wujin’s three verses too wordy, so he combined the three questions into another verse: “Coming and going at ease, entering and leaving without hindrance. Originally dust, carefree beyond worldly dharmas.” Only when one is carefree beyond worldly dharmas can one be called “at ease in coming and going, unhindered in entering and leaving.” The physical body has always been dust; where is there any “self”?

Everyone can be carefree beyond worldly dharmas; they simply refuse to be carefree. You do not believe it? Look at how they cling while alive, how unable they are to let go—let alone after death. Whom else can they blame?

Namo Amitābha Buddha. Namo Master Yuanyin. Teacher Qi’s explanation is excellent. Qinglong 11:21:44, 7/23/02 (no content)

Namo Root Guru Acharya Yuanyin! lvm 11:24:00, 7/23/02 (no content)

68. Draining Pools and Toppling Mountains

[Original Koan]

Among the community under Chan Master Liangshan Guan, there was a garden steward who had realized Chan, though many in the assembly did not believe it. One day, a monk went to provoke him, hoping to make him reveal some sign of his attainment. He asked the garden steward, “Why not go out and ask the abbot a question or two, thereby forming an affinity?”

The garden steward said, “Unless I do not go out to ask a question. If I do, I will make that old fellow get down from his meditation seat and stand on the ground.”

When Liangshan ascended the Dharma seat, he indeed came forward and asked, “What is it like when it is difficult to guard against the thief within one’s own house?”

Liangshan said, “To recognize it is not to be wronged by it.”

He said, “What after recognizing it?”

Liangshan said, “Banish it to the realm of non-arising.”

He said, “Is there not even a place there for it to settle itself and establish its life?”

Liangshan said, “Dead water does not harbor dragons.”

He said, “What is the dragon in living water?”

Liangshan said, “It raises waves without making breakers.”

He said, “What if, all at once, a deep pool is overturned and a mountain toppled?”

Liangshan then indeed descended from the Dharma seat, seized him, and said, “Ācārya! Do not let the corners of this old monk’s robe get wet.”

The Master said: You should know that when one who is awakened meets another who is awakened, their giving and taking naturally make a sight worth seeing.

[Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight]

Under Chan Master Liangshan Yuanguan of the Caodong school, there was a garden steward responsible for growing vegetables. Liangshan Guan said that he had awakened, but no one much believed it. One day, someone went to provoke the garden steward, hoping that he would display the bearing of one who had awakened. The garden steward said, “Unless I do not go out to ask a question. If I do go out to ask, I can make the old master get down from his meditation seat and

stand on the ground to speak with me." Thus, the following dialogue, which has been passed down through the ages, took place the next day:

The garden steward asked, "What is it like when it is difficult to guard against the thief within one's own house?"—The arising of mind and stirring of thoughts are called "the thief within one's own house." But thoughts continually arise and stir; what is one to do?

Liangshan answered, "To recognize it is not to be wronged by it."—When you notice that thoughts are arising and stirring within you, the light of wisdom has already arisen. Your study of Chan has not been in vain.

"What after recognizing it?"—What should one do after noticing it? Suppress it, or indulge it?

"Banish it to the realm of non-arising."—Neither suppress it nor indulge it. Do not attend to it, and it will be unable to arise.

"Is there not even a place there for it to settle itself and establish its life?"—Should one abide in this state in which it cannot arise?

"Dead water does not harbor dragons."—How could one abide there? How could a stagnant pool do, without lively and vibrant functioning?

"What is the dragon in living water?"—Then how does one function?

"It raises waves without making breakers."—Though the waves surge and billow (responsive functioning), no breakers arise (non-abiding).

At this point, the dialogue should have ended. Yet the garden steward still did not let Liangshan off, but continued, "What if, all at once, a deep pool is overturned and a mountain toppled?"—Suppose the waters of a bottomless abyss are suddenly poured out, with a force sufficient to wash away mountains. What then? This is a metaphor for the moment when one takes up a blade and enters the fray: can there still be no breakers rising?

Liangshan then indeed descended from the Dharma seat, seized the garden steward, and said, "Ācārya! Do not let the corners of this old monk's robe get wet."—Even if a deep pool is overturned and a mountain toppled, no breakers have arisen; not even the corners of this old monk's robe have been wetted.

In fact, Liangshan could have spoken these words while seated on the meditation seat. Why did he descend from it and stand on the ground? Look at the hidden meaning in the garden steward's final question:

“Overturning a deep pool and toppling a mountain.” Overturning a deep pool means that the two of us fully reveal our vibrant Buddha-nature to the assembly. Toppling a mountain means: You have always sat unmoving like a mountain; this time, please also demonstrate being toppled.

Teacher and disciple were in complete accord, mind to mind. How could Liangshan have failed to understand his meaning? Moreover, he could infer that the garden steward had already boasted about it. Liangshan knew that the garden steward was a person of clear vision. Previously, when Liangshan had told everyone that he was awakened, it was so that they might learn from him; he would not mislead anyone. Today, then, he would fulfill his wish. So he descended from the Dharma seat.

Yet once was permissible; it would not do for this to happen all the time. How could one casually descend from the Dharma seat? Once the Dharma seat is moved, nothing is secure. Therefore, Liangshan seized the garden steward and cautioned him: “Do not let the corners of this old monk’s robe get wet.”—Do not boast like this again in the future. If you do, how am I to remain seated on this Dharma seat?

Sixty-Nine: A Half-Full Bottle Sloshes Around

[Original Koan]

Chan Master Zhantang said: “When a Chan practitioner first joins the assembly, an initially aspiring bodhisattva stands shoulder to shoulder with the Buddha. After a year, he is down to the Buddha’s waist. It is like a glass bottle: at first it is utterly bare and perfectly clean, but then it takes in half a bottle of unclean water. When shaken, it clinks and clatters incessantly inside.”

Then suddenly a genuine person may say to him: “This bottle was originally clean, but now it contains this foul water. It is not full, so it keeps rattling. If you want it not to rattle, you must pour it out and cast it away as before. Wash it clean, then fill it with a bottleful of good water, and it will no longer rattle.” Why does it not rattle? Because it is full.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Wenzhun of Zhantang said: “When a Chan practitioner first joins the assembly, an initially aspiring bodhisattva stands shoulder to shoulder with the Buddha.

Why can such a person stand shoulder to shoulder with the Buddha? Because the initial resolve is fierce! When the conditions for liberation ripen, one who has just begun to practice does so with exceptional vigor. In an instant, one sees through the world and casts all deluded thoughts and attachments to it far behind. One is utterly

bare and perfectly clean; hence it is said that one “stands shoulder to shoulder with the Buddha.”

But why, “after a year, is he down to the Buddha’s waist”? Because he has “taken in half a bottle of unclean water”—a semblance of Buddhadharma. He mistakes his own understanding of the Buddhadharma for its true meaning. Because it is “unclean,” it becomes an obstacle of knowledge; he can no longer take in good water, and the bottle cannot be filled. Again, because of this “uncleanliness,” nothing he sees accords with the Dharma, and nothing appeals to him. He criticizes everyone he encounters, clinking and clattering without cease.

Then he suddenly encounters a genuine person, who says to him: “This bottle was originally clean (bodhi’s intrinsic nature is originally pure), yet you have filled it with foul water (the Buddhadharma is not like that). It is not full, so it keeps rattling (a full bottle does not rattle; a half-full bottle sloshes about). If you want it not to rattle, you must pour it out and cast it away as before (you must realize that ‘at the very moment of first arousing the resolve, one immediately attains perfect enlightenment’). Wash it clean, fill it with a bottleful of good water, and it will no longer rattle (simply use this mind, and directly realize Buddhahood).”

Why does it no longer rattle once it has been washed clean? Because it has already been filled with good water.

Teacher, how is the good water put in? Little Junior Disciple, 10:27:05, 7/24/02 (no content)

Perhaps there is no need to put it in at all. Azure Dragon, 14:04:00, 7/26/02 (no content)

Then one must first know how the foul water got in. lvm, 11:04:53, 7/24/02 (64)

Wash it away completely. Big Mouse, 11:13:34, 7/24/02 (no content)

Filling without filling—this is called true filling. lvm, 11:19:49, 7/24/02 (no content)

^o^ Little Junior Disciple, 11:37:20, 7/24/02 (no content)

Seventy: Illnesses and Their Remedies

[Original Text of the Koan]

Venerable Yanyang visited Zhaozhou. A monk asked, “What is Buddha?” He said, “A clod of earth.” “What is Dharma?” He said, “The earth moves.” “What is Saṅgha?” “Eating gruel and eating rice.” He further asked, “What is the water of Xinxing?” He said, “In the river ahead.”

The master said: “A Dharma gate such as this seems like children’s play. Only upon entering such a Dharma gate can one truly be at ease. When Chan Master Zhenjing brought up the ancients, he was no less than Xuedou; yet when latter-day followers transmitted and studied it, it became abusive speech. Petty people keep asking, ‘What did the ancients say?’ What did Zhenru say? What did Yangqi say? … Why concern yourselves with so many idle matters? To cure an illness, there is no need for donkey- or camel-borne medicine. If the medicine suits the illness, a blade of grass picked up beneath a fence will cure it. Why speak of cinnabar, aconite, ginseng, atractylodes, and the like?”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Venerable Yanyang of Xinxing in Hongzhou, whose personal name was Shanxin, first visited Zhaozhou and asked, “What is it like when one brings not a single thing?” Zhaozhou said, “Put it down.” The master said, “Since I bring not a single thing, what is there to put down?” Zhaozhou said, “If you cannot put it down, carry it away!” At these words, the master attained great awakening.

After taking up residence, a monk asked, “What is Buddha?” The master said, “A clod of earth.” “What is Dharma?” The master said, “The earth moves.” “What is Saṅgha?” The master said, “Eating gruel and eating rice.” Asked, “What is the water of Xinxing?” the master said, “In the river before you.” Asked, “What is manifesting forms in response to things?” the master said, “Bring that bed over to me.”

The master was often followed by a snake and a tiger, which he fed from his own hand.

Chan Master Dahui commented: “Such an utterly plain Dharma gate looks like children’s play to outsiders. Yet if one can truly enter this Dharma gate, one is then a person of genuine ease and freedom. He was so plain and natural that even when the snake and tiger ate food directly from his hand, it was entirely ordinary.”

See how ordinarily he answered: a clod of earth, the earth moves, eating gruel and eating rice, water in the river. The same words, when spoken by different people, convey different realms. For example, when Chan Master Zhenjing brought up the ancients, he would begin by scolding, yet his realm was no less than Xuedou’s. But when those of the “latter stream” transmitted and studied Zhenjing’s words, it became abusive speech!

Those “petty people” keep asking what the ancients said, what Chan Master Zhenru said, what Chan Master Yangqi said. … Whatever he said had its own reasons; can you really concern yourselves with so many idle matters? The Buddhadharma prescribes medicine according to the illness. If someone is ill, they do not take medicine meant for donkeys or camels, because it does not suit the illness. If the

medicine truly suits the illness, even a blade of grass pulled up from beneath a fence can cure it. Once the illness is cured, why concern oneself with “cinnabar, aconite, ginseng, atractylodes,” and the like?

The Buddha instructed Cūḍapanthaka to recite the two words “broom.” Cūḍapanthaka recited them without ceasing and directly attained the fruition of arhatship. Ha ha! Into which stage should this “broom” Dharma gate, by which one can attain arhatship in this very life, be placed? To which of the superior, middling, or inferior categories does it belong?

Skillful means is itself the ultimate. Sudhana 20:53:12 7/25/02 (no content)

What, then, is ultimate? manman 12:36:15 7/26/02 (no content)

Realize it through skillful means~ Sudhana 15:20:36 7/26/02 (no content)

Realize the ultimate through skillful means? manman 22:14:24 7/26/02 (no content)

You really are not afraid of trouble?! Sudhana 22:30:30 7/26/02 (no content)

Are you afraid of trouble? manman 22:52:47 7/26/02 (no content)

Heh-heh! Those really are the uninhibited words of a child~ Sudhana 00:10:47 7/27/02 (no content)

One palm alone cannot make a sound. manman 19:51:38 7/28/02 (no content)

You two, since you have the opportunity, just go have some tea! Daizi 09:47:04 7/27/02 (no content)

Thank you for the tea. manman 19:53:27 7/28/02 (no content)

Seventy-One: A Person of Great Wisdom

[Original Koan]

Among True Purity’s assembly was Head Seat Zhaotai. When he went to Wuzu, the patriarch saw him cite True Purity’s Recorded Sayings and praised him, saying, “This is a person of great wisdom.”

The Master said: Of the venerable successors of Old Nan, Wuzu approved only the two elders Huitang and True Purity; he approved of none of the rest. Wuzu was like a blade concealed in cotton: as soon as he pressed you, he would stab you in the throat and kill you outright. True Purity was different: wherever you got caught—at

the feet, he would kill you at the feet; at the hands, he would kill you at the hands; at the throat, he would kill you at the throat.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Zhaotai, the head-seat disciple of Chan Master True Purity, came to visit Chan Master Fayan of Wuzu and spoke of how Chan Master True Purity had said this and that. When Wuzu heard this, he praised him: “True Purity is a person of great wisdom!”

Chan Master Dahui commented: Among the successors of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan, Wuzu approved of only two—the elders Huitang and True Purity. None of the other successors of Huanglong met with Wuzu’s approval. Chan Master Wuzu taught students in a manner that seemed soft as cotton, but in fact concealed a blade within the cotton.

As soon as he pressed them (when the opportunity arose to awaken them), he would stab them in the throat and kill them outright (striking at the crucial point and, in a single blow, extinguishing the student’s deluded attachments). True Purity had another style: wherever one got caught—at the feet, he would kill one at the feet; at the hands, he would kill one at the hands; at the throat, he would kill one at the throat.

—He would seize upon whatever point the student raised, leaving you utterly bare and wholly cleansed. Although their styles differed, the effect was the same: to kill the student’s deluded thoughts and attachments on the spot, pressing the student to recognize the innate ray of true light.

Chan Master Wuzu belonged to the Yangqi branch, whereas Huitang and True Purity belonged to the Huanglong branch. Huanglong and Yangqi had different styles of Chan, but only their methods differed; their purpose was the same. Any method is good if it can awaken students. Wuzu praised the two elders Huitang and True Purity because they could enable students to cast off deluded attachments and set their eyes straight.

Teacher Qi, if a sword pierces his throat, where can he cast himself? Qinglong 14:07:10 7/26/02 (no content)

Even if his throat is not pierced, where can he cast himself? lvm 14:27:08 7/26/02 (no content)

Someone, come! Shancai 15:45:23 7/26/02 (12)

There are two assassins at 72. Arrest them tomorrow. lvm 18:58:05 7/26/02 (no content)

In that case, let him go for now. Shancai 17:43:15 7/27/02 (no content)

^_^. There is a mole beside my face. Qinglong 16:14:06 7/30/02 (no content)

Heh heh, did it drip down from the ceiling? Shancai 20:06:50 7/30/02 (no content)

What if he cast himself into confusion? Qinglong 15:37:47 7/26/02 (no content)

Look at the sword! Dingling 23:46:40 7/26/02 (484)

What? People often get caught on this. Qinglong 19:51:36 7/27/02 (no content)

Caught on what? Dingling 07:25:15 7/28/02 (6)

@_@ Qinglong 15:41:38 7/30/02 (no content)

In the gloomy summer woods, cuckoos call. Dingling 19:53:11 7/31/02 (no content)

The sword has been drawn, the matter is finished—I'm off to sleep. Niaoren 23:51:38 7/26/02 (no content)

A silver-looking wax spearhead: it melts as soon as it meets fire. Niaoren 23:55:42 7/26/02 (no content)

Piercing his throat is precisely a metaphor for breaking through his confusion; it is not to let him cast himself anywhere. lvm 16:08:53 7/26/02 (no content)

^_^ Qinglong 17:23:22 7/26/02 (no content)

Cast yourself! Cast yourself! Daizi 09:43:40 7/27/02 (50)

Better put it in your bag. Qinglong 19:50:32 7/27/02 (no content)

This fellow is dragging through mud and water—not much like a swordsman! Shancai 15:53:20 7/26/02 (no content)

Our home is being renovated. ^_^ Qinglong 17:24:42 7/26/02 (no content)

72. The Imperial Son-in-Law Composes a Verse

[Original Text of the Koan]

Li Zunxu, Duke Consort and Commandant, received the essential teaching from Chan Master Shimen Cong.

He once composed two lines of verse and sent them to Zhu Zhengci, Commissioner of Transport. At the time, Xu Shi was Transport Commissioner for Huainan. Zhu

showed Li's verse to Xu and invited him to compose a response with him. The verse read: "To study the Way, one must be an iron man; once one sets hand to it, one must decide it in one's heart." Zhu said: "Rain hastens the woodcutter home," and Xu said: "Wind sends the fishing boat to shore."

They also asked Chan Master Fushan Yuan to compose a response. He said: "To study the Way, one must be an iron man; once one sets hand to it, one must decide it in one's heart. Though the whole body be eyes, it must still be forged again in the red-hot furnace. Chu Ni strikes a tree, deluded and self-enclosed; Yu Rang hides himself and swallows charcoal. An egret flies, its reflection falls upon the autumn river; wind sends reed blossoms along both banks." When the gentlemen saw it, they greatly admired it.

Li then composed his own response: "To practice Chan, one must be an iron man; once one sets hand to it, one must decide it in one's heart. Go straight toward unsurpassed bodhi; pay no heed to all questions of right and wrong." Today, only this final verse has been passed down.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

The lay practitioner Li Zunxu, a disciple of Chan Master Guyin Yuncong of Shimen Valley in Xiangzhou and a Duke Consort and Commandant by rank, wrote only the first two lines of the verse: "To study the Way, one must be an iron man; once one sets hand to it, one must decide it in one's heart." He left the remaining lines for everyone else to continue.

The lay practitioners Zhu Zhengci and Xu Shi completed it as follows: "To study the Way, one must be an iron man; once one sets hand to it, one must decide it in one's heart. Rain hastens the woodcutter home; wind sends the fishing boat to shore." Both were officials: to return home or reach the shore, they still needed wind and rain to urge them on. Ordinarily, even when walking, they had to rely on carriages, horses, or sedan chairs. That too must have become a habit.

Chan Master Fushan Fayuan completed it as follows: "To study the Way, one must be an iron man; once one sets hand to it, one must decide it in one's heart. Though the whole body be eyes, it must still be forged again in the red-hot furnace. Chu Ni strikes a tree, deluded and self-enclosed; Yu Rang hides himself and swallows charcoal. An egret flies, its reflection falls upon the autumn river; wind sends reed blossoms along both banks." When everyone read this verse, they were greatly impressed.

"Though the whole body be eyes, it must still be forged again in the red-hot furnace"—although the delusions of views have already been eliminated and the Dharma eye shines unobstructedly, one must still eliminate the delusions of

thought, temper oneself in the sea of birth and death, and diligently remove the habitual tendencies of deluded attachment.

“Chu Ni strikes a tree, deluded and self-enclosed”—Chu Ni was an iron man who sacrificed his life for righteousness. The Zuo Commentary says: “Duke Ling of Jin was no true ruler (Duke Ling of Jin was muddleheaded and without the Way), and Zhao Dun repeatedly remonstrated with him (Zhao Dun, a high minister of Jin, remonstrated despite the duke’s displeasure). Duke Ling resented this deeply, and sent Chu Ni to assassinate him.”

“He went in the morning, and the bedchamber door was open (before daybreak, Chu Ni secretly entered Zhao Dun’s home, but the main gate was already open). Zhao Dun was fully dressed and about to go to court; because it was still early, he sat dozing (Zhao Dun had already put on his court robes. Since it was still early, he sat and nodded off).”

“Chu Ni stepped back a few paces and said: ‘He does not forget reverence and respect; he is the people’s leader.’”

“‘To assassinate the people’s leader is disloyalty; to abandon the ruler’s command is untrustworthiness. If one is guilty of either of these, it is better to die.’”

“He struck a locust tree and died (Chu Ni smashed his head against a locust tree and killed himself). Zhao Dun was thus spared.” Chan Master Fayuan’s description of Chu Ni as “deluded and self-enclosed” means that he was confused and shut himself off, so that he could neither recognize the larger situation nor take the overall good into account. Consider this: although you died, what if Duke Ling of Jin sent another assassin to kill Zhao Dun? Would it not have been better to retire into seclusion from then on and secretly protect Zhao Dun?

“Yu Rang hides himself and swallows charcoal”—Yu Rang, too, was an iron man who sacrificed his life for righteousness. Presumably everyone knows his story. If not, please click here.

Chan Master Fushan Fayuan cited the stories of two “iron men” in order to inspire students of the Way: one must likewise be willing to relinquish everything in studying the Way, even one’s life—“If one hears the Way in the morning, one may die content in the evening.”

“An egret flies, its reflection falls upon the autumn river”—the egret’s flight means transcending the world: one gives one’s life in diligent practice, even eliminating all delusions of views and thought, and illuminating through the twofold birth and death of segmentation and transformation. Its reflection falling upon the autumn

river means that one may still engage in Buddha-work like a dream or illusion, in a Way-place like the moon reflected in water.

“Wind sends reed blossoms along both banks”—the wind’s sending means acting without intention: originally there are no sentient beings to liberate, no appearance of beings, and no appearance of liberation. The reed blossoms along both banks mean liberating immeasurable and boundless sentient beings in this way.

Finally, the lay practitioner Li Zunxu himself continued: “To practice Chan, one must be an iron man; once one sets hand to it, one must decide it in one’s heart. Go straight toward unsurpassed bodhi; pay no heed to all questions of right and wrong.” With this, he swept aside all the various preceding verses. At the same time, by pointing out “go straight toward unsurpassed bodhi,” he also provided a summary.

Now, the only verse that everyone frequently recites is this final one.

The master’s learning is truly profound, his practice truly lofty, and his understanding truly complete. 99477 08:46:33 8/01/02 (no content)

I also append a verse. Qinglong 15:13:30 7/29/02 (88)

Let us make it four lines: lvm 09:50:45 7/30/02 (228)

A teacher is indeed a teacher. :) Qinglong 15:41:13 7/30/02 (no content)

This is truly so well written! At last, I... Kangkang 11:02:56 7/30/02 (no content)

Seventy-Three: The Four Precepts for an Abbot

[Original Text of the Koan]

When Chan Master Fojian was first invited to serve as abbot of Taiping Monastery in Shuzhou, he went to bid farewell to Wuzu. Wuzu said, “In general, an abbot must observe four cautions in disciplining himself: First, do not exhaust your influence. Second, do not exhaust your blessings. Third, do not carry regulations to the limit. Fourth, do not say all the pleasing things there are to say. Why? If you say all the pleasing things, people will surely take you lightly. If you carry regulations to the limit, people will surely find them burdensome. If you exhaust your blessings, your affinities will surely become few. If you exhaust your influence, misfortune will surely come.” Fojian bowed again and again, took these words to heart, and withdrew.

Later, when Fojian took leave of Lingyuan, Lingyuan said, “An abbot should hang his staff, bundle, and hat on the wall of the abbot’s quarters, and be as light in coming and going as an ordinary patch-robed monk. That would be well.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

According to the Compendium of the Five Lamps: “When Lingyuan of Taiping (Chan Master Lingyuan Weiqing of Huanglong, in Longxing Prefecture) went to Huanglong, his seat at Taiping became vacant. Lingyuan recommended the master (Fojian Huiqin) to Sun Dingchen, the prefect of Shuzhou, who then appointed him to fill the post.”

Chan Master Lingyuan Weiqing, the abbot of the Taiping practice center, was a successor in the Huanglong lineage. When he was invited to preside over the Huanglong practice center, he recommended Fojian Huiqin of the Yangqi lineage to the local authorities as his successor at Taiping. This reveals Chan Master Lingyuan Weiqing’s broad-mindedness: he valued only the correctness of one’s insight, not sectarian affiliation.

When Fojian took leave of his teacher, Chan Master Wuzu Fayan, Wuzu instructed him: “To serve as abbot, one must discipline oneself before one can guide others. There are four cautions that should be kept in mind: First, do not exhaust your influence. Second, do not exhaust your blessings. Third, do not carry regulations to the limit. Fourth, do not say all the pleasing things there are to say.”

Why? Because if one says all the pleasing things, students will look down on him and leave him. If one carries regulations to the limit, one falls into pedantry, causing students to remain anxious all day long. If one exhausts one’s blessings, one’s affinities diminish and one will inevitably become isolated. If one exhausts one’s influence, misfortune will come.” These are all words born of experience. Fojian gratefully received his teacher’s instruction, bowed repeatedly in thanks, and departed.

After Fojian arrived at Taiping Chan Monastery and the formal transfer had been completed, Chan Master Lingyuan Weiqing gave him these instructions as he took leave: “As abbot, you should be like an ordinary student monk: hang your everyday belongings on the wall, and come and go as lightly as an ordinary student monk. That is the proper way.”

The ancients disciplined themselves in this way and attached such importance to the principle that personal example outweighs verbal instruction. What, then, should we students do?

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“Personal example outweighs verbal instruction”—how wonderful! 99477 08:50:19 8/01/02 (no content)

Stones from other hills can polish jade. Let us also see how Elder Nan scolds people! Withered Tree Blossoms 09:16:55 7/29/02 (10K)

I pay homage to Mr. Nan Huaijin! Green 22:17:25 7/29/02 (no content)

I gratefully accept the instruction! Big Mouse 14:38:13 7/29/02 (no content)

We students should be even stricter in disciplining ourselves. Little Junior Disciple 20:51:21 7/28/02 (86)

Seventy-Four: Do Not Slander Others' Goodness

Original Text of the Koan

Xu Shichuan went with Foguo to the secretary's quarters and saw Foguo's portrait. Shichuan pointed to it and said, "This old fellow's heels have not yet touched the ground." Foguo said, "When has a turtle ever escaped from a jar?" Shichuan said, "I am glad that this old fellow's heels have touched the ground." Foguo said, "Do not slander him."

Sawing Open a Scale Weight

Xu Fu, who held office as a Privy Councilor, had the style name Shichuan and the sobriquet Layman Donghu. At the beginning of the Jingkang era, he and several court colleagues interested in the Chan school lived at Foguo's practice center and studied Chan with him. In fact, they also intended to assess Foguo's realization. Xu Shichuan's understanding was lofty and exceptional, and Foguo greatly appreciated him.

A portrait of Foguo hung in the secretary's quarters. One day, Xu Shichuan and Foguo came there and saw Foguo's portrait. Pointing to it, Xu Shichuan said, "This old fellow's heels have still not touched the ground." Foguo said, "When has a turtle ever escaped from a jar?" Xu Shichuan said, "I am glad that this old fellow's heels have touched the ground." Foguo said, "Do not slander him!" Xu Shichuan then let the matter rest.

"This old fellow's heels have still not touched the ground."—A negating remark. This is probing with a pole and stirring the grass: testing him to see how he would respond.

"When has a turtle ever escaped from a jar?"—It is originally complete and present just as it is. Why are you fussing about it here?

"I am glad that this old fellow's heels have touched the ground."—An affirming remark. This too is probing with a pole and stirring the grass. When the adverse

wind did not ensnare you, he changed to a favorable wind to see whether you would take the bait. In fact, it was another ladleful of foul water!

“Do not slander him!”—Do not malign me for no reason!

How could Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu possibly fall for such a trap? Never mind your favorable and adverse winds: even if all eight worldly winds blew at once, I would remain unmoved.

Xu Shichuan could not shake Foguo, so he could only let the matter rest.

I am ashamed; I do not understand. 99477 08:59:44 8/01/02 (no content)

75. What Is the Great Sage’s Surname?

[Original Koan]

Elder Wulong visited Feng Jichuan. In the course of their conversation, he said: “Long ago, an official asked the Great Sage of Sizhou, ‘Master, what is your surname?’ The Sage replied, ‘My surname is He.’ The official asked, ‘What country do you live in?’ The Sage replied, ‘I live in the country of He.’ What is the meaning of this?”

Wulong said, “The Great Sage’s surname was not originally He, nor was he a native of the country of He. He merely adapted to conditions in order to liberate beings.”

Feng laughed and said, “The Great Sage’s surname was certainly He, and he certainly lived in the country of He.” They went back and forth like this several times.

They then wrote to the Master, asking him to resolve this koan. The Master said: “There are sixty blows of the stick: thirty for the Great Sage, for he should not have said that his surname was He; and thirty for Jichuan, for he should not have said that the Great Sage’s surname was certainly He. As for Elder Wulong, let him take himself out and receive his own.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Long ago, the Great Sage of Sizhou traveled among people, teaching and transforming them. If someone asked him, “What is your surname?” he would casually answer, “Yes! My surname is He.” If asked again, “What country do you live in?” he would answer, “Yes! I live in the country of He.” Ha ha! The Great Sage vividly enacted a living drama of “answering right where the question is asked.”

Elder Wulong said, “In fact, the Great Sage’s surname was not originally He, nor was he a native of the country of He. This was merely his adapting to conditions in order

to liberate beings." This is easy enough to understand. Search your own heart and ask yourself: do we not think the same way?

Feng Jichuan said, "The Great Sage's surname was certainly He, and he certainly lived in the country of He." This is harder to understand. What Feng Jichuan meant was that where one lives and what one is called are merely labels. Since he said that his surname was He and that he lived in the country of He, it is certainly acceptable to use these labels.

One said that his surname was He, while the other said that it was not He. Unable to settle their dispute, the two wrote a letter to Chan Master Dahui Zonggao and asked him to judge who was right.

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao replied: "The Great Sage should not have said that his surname was He, so he deserves thirty blows of the stick. Feng Jichuan should not have said that the Great Sage's surname was certainly He, so he too deserves thirty blows. As for whether Elder Wulong deserves a beating, he should go out and think it over carefully himself."

Why should saying "his surname is He" earn one a beating? Why should saying "his surname is certainly He" also earn one a beating? Ah, do not puzzle over this. If you do puzzle over it, you deserve sixty blows of the stick!

Are we not, like Elder Wulong, of the view that "the Great Sage's surname was not originally He, nor was he a native of the country of He"? Since Elder Wulong should think this over carefully, we too should reflect carefully at close range: why do we think that "the Great Sage's surname was not originally He, nor was he a native of the country of He"?

You deserve a beating too—you have spoken unclearly. Huo Mu Ke 18:46:02 7/31/02 (no content)

Should you be beaten or not? lvm 19:04:18 7/31/02 (no content)

Beat me if you wish. But could you refrain from asking that question? That would truly set an example for us younger ones. Chan Diyi 19:12:56 7/31/02 (no content)

Could you ask one question on my behalf, please? lvm 19:16:33 7/31/02 (no content)

Hee hee, I am Huo Mu Ke—what second question could there be? Teacher, you have worked so hard. Chan Diyi 19:25:25 7/31/02 (no content)

Oh! So that is how it is. lvm 20:09:51 7/31/02 (no content)

Please forgive my fooling around, Teacher. :) Chan Diyi 20:16:06 7/31/02 (no content)

It is nothing! It is nothing! You are always welcome here. ^o^ lvm 20:18:54 7/31/02 (no content)

An egret flies; its shadow falls on the autumn river. The wind carries reed blossoms along both banks. Dingling 19:59:36 7/31/02 (no content)

The shadow of my white egret has fallen into a cesspit, and the wind has blown away this bellyful of stench. You rascal, are you cursing me? :) Chan Diyi 20:22:09 7/31/02 (no content)

Brother Chan, your wit is truly amusing. :) Dingling 22:34:18 7/31/02 (no content)

The Great Sage's surname is He. Huo Mu Ke 18:43:27 7/31/02 (613)

Please instruct me, Teacher! Dingling 19:33:44 7/30/02 (14)

Face west and look east. lvm 20:08:11 7/30/02 (no content)

Oh! You have me by the ear. Dingling 20:52:55 7/30/02 (12)

To argue over right and wrong is to cling to the two sides. Qinglong 15:55:10 7/30/02 (46)

Ha ha, child, how rude. Shancai 20:01:35 7/30/02 (28)

Hee hee, please instruct me. Dingling 20:37:21 7/30/02 (12)

East, east! Shancai 21:13:27 7/30/02 (no content)

Old Dahui deserves a beating too. Teacher, why trouble yourself? I bow in homage! Withered Wood Blooms 09:43:12 7/30/02 (20)

Oh! Gently, gently. It hurts! It hurts! lvm 09:55:32 7/30/02 (no content)

When the mind-ground is selfless, heaven and earth are vast; only compassion makes one fit to sit amid burning coals… Withered Wood Blooms 12:20:56 7/30/02 (30)

Since you remember the Buddha's grace, why go off and become a bandit? manman 13:53:33 7/30/02 (26)

What is there to think about? It originally is. Renjue 07:57:04 7/30/02 (no content)

Seventy-Six: The Mind of Protecting the Dharma

[The Original Koan]

While Layman Wujin was living at his private residence, there happened to be a year of famine. Some Daoists came to his gate seeking alms of rice. Wujin therefore urged each of them to recite the Diamond Sūtra. For each section recited, he gave one dou of rice; if they completed the recitation, he gave three shi and two dou of rice. He wished to form for them an affinity with prajñā, and thus spoke of giving both material wealth and the Dharma. Whenever monks came, he likewise urged them to recite Laozi, so that each side might know of the other's teachings. Such was the sincerity of his wish to protect the teachings.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Layman Zhang Wujin, a former prime minister, had once been removed from office and was living at home in retirement. During this period, whenever there was a year of famine and Daoists came to his door seeking alms of rice, Layman Wujin asked them to read and recite the Buddhist Diamond Sūtra. For each section they recited, he gave them one dou of rice; if they completed all thirty-two sections of the sūtra, he gave them three shi and two dou of rice. Whenever Buddhist monks came to his door seeking alms of rice, Layman Wujin asked them to read and recite Laozi's Dao De Jing.

Layman Wujin did this so that they might come to understand each other's teachings. If one does not understand the deeper meaning of another tradition, yet rashly attacks it, one is not only like scratching an itch through a boot—unable to reach the itch—but also merely creates further karma of speech, thereby harming oneself instead.

Layman Wujin was not asking Buddhists to convert to Daoism, nor Daoists to convert to Buddhism. Still less was he seeking to merge the two teachings into one, or to subsume one teaching under the banner of the other. Rather, he wished for the various traditions to seek common ground while preserving their differences and to live together harmoniously. If one recklessly attacks other teachings, insisting that one's own teaching should unify the minds of all humanity, one will not only fail to achieve one's aim but ultimately harm oneself. To refrain from recklessly attacking other teachings is, in fact, to protect oneself.

Chan Master Dahui said that this was Layman Wujin's wish to protect the teachings. A colleague asked, “Which teaching was he protecting? Buddhism or Daoism?” Everyone, search your hearts and ask yourselves: Do we have the same question? If so, should we also read the Dao De Jing?

Seventy-Seven: A Flock of Crows Carrying Earth

[Original Text of the Koan]

When Liao Dengguan was magistrate of Shanhua County in Tanzhou, there was an old woman who recited the Diamond Sūtra every day. She begged for food in the marketplace and spent the nights lodging in a mountain hollow. Suddenly, she was not seen begging for several days, and a flock of crows gathered noisily at the place where she stayed. Someone was sent to look and found that she had passed away beside a cliff, holding the Diamond Sūtra in her arms. The crows carried earth to cover her.

The Master brought up this story in a Dharma talk; at that time, Magistrate Liao was also seated among the audience.

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

In Shanhua County, there was an old woman who begged for food in the marketplace and recited the Diamond Sūtra every day. She had no home and slept beneath a mountain cliff at night. Then, suddenly, people noticed that she had not been seen begging for dozens of days. A large flock of birds was flying and calling around the cliff where she lived.

Everyone went to look beneath the cliff and found that the old woman had entered parinirvāṇa beside the rock, holding the Diamond Sūtra in her arms. The large flock of birds was carrying earth in their beaks to bury her. This old woman, who upheld the Diamond Sūtra every day, had such great power to inspire that she moved the birds to conduct her funeral!

When Chan Master Dahui told this story to the assembly, Liao Dengguan, the magistrate of Shanhua County, was seated below listening. This fully attests that the event was true and not false.

Seventy-Eight: Words of One Who Has Arrived Home

[Original Koan Text]

One day, the Master went to Mingyue Hermitage and saw a painted skull on the wall. Feng Jichuan composed this verse: “The corpse is here; where is the person? Thus one knows that the numinous spirit does not dwell in the skin bag.”

The Master did not approve, and so composed another verse: “This very body is the person himself. The numinous spirit is the skin bag; the skin bag is the numinous spirit.”

[The Elder’s Marginal Note]

Is there any dharma outside the mind?

These are precisely the words of one who has arrived home!

[Sawing Open the Scale Weight]

One day, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao went to Mingyue Hermitage and saw a skull painted on the wall. Beside it was a verse written by the lay practitioner Feng Jichuan: “The corpse is here; where is the person? Thus one knows that the numinous spirit does not dwell in the skin bag.”

Clearly, Lay Practitioner Feng held that the body was the body and the numinous spirit was the numinous spirit: the body was the physical form, the numinous spirit was the mind, and there was another physical form outside the mind. In fact, not only is the body not outside the wondrously luminous true mind, but this very numinous spirit is not outside the mind either. The Elder commented: “Is there any dharma outside the mind?” This question strikes directly at Lay Practitioner Feng’s vital point! One must understand that the notion of seeking dharmas outside the mind is the thinking of non-Buddhist paths.

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao naturally could not agree with Lay Practitioner Feng’s view, so he composed another verse: “This very body is the person himself. The numinous spirit is the skin bag; the skin bag is the numinous spirit.” Here, “the person himself” refers to the wondrously luminous true mind—Buddha-nature. The body, too, is not outside Buddha-nature; the numinous spirit is the skin bag, and the skin bag is the numinous spirit. Therefore, the Elder praised Dahui’s verse: “These are precisely the words of one who has arrived home!”

A fellow practitioner said: “The numinous spirit of which Lay Practitioner Feng speaks refers to the eighth consciousness. The eighth ālaya consciousness ‘departs last and arrives first, acting as the master’; how could the eighth consciousness be a skin bag?” In saying this, however, he had forgotten the substance of the eighth consciousness and retained only the name “eighth consciousness”; that was merely his own mistaken understanding of the “eighth consciousness.” One must understand that the myriad phenomena, including this insignificant skin bag, are all the object aspect of the eighth consciousness. How can the skin bag be excluded from the eighth consciousness?

Only what accords with the Mahāyāna seal of the one true reality is Mahāyāna Buddhism. When speaking of emptiness, both person and form are empty; when speaking of existence, both person and form exist. They are not split into two parts; it is not that the form is empty while the person is real.

This scale weight can only be understood thoroughly and intimately by sawing it open!!! Shangchi 09:13:04 8/02/02 (no content)

Oh... just like me: Changqing 11:23:47 8/02/02 (12)

Learning from Teacher LVM. Changqing 09:04:42 8/02/02 (195)

An excerpt from Wen Zhai [Digest]. [Shancai] 11:10:58 11/20/02 (112)

— A Short Poem — [Shancai] 21:59:31 11/23/02 (121)

Birds fly freely because heaven and earth are vast; flowers fall upon stones and drift with the stream. [zwz0099] 08:22:19 11/25/02 (no content)

What about when the numinous spirit does not rely on a womb? [Shancai] 22:03:03 11/23/02 (no content)

Revisiting Zongmen Wuku: “Words of One Who Has Arrived Home.” [Shancai] 22:10:57 11/23/02 (256)

— Savior — [Shancai] 21:58:26 11/23/02 (311)

— A Bit of Humor — [Shancai] 20:51:19 11/20/02 (171)

Being faster than you would not be good either, haha! [Taozi] 21:25:09 11/20/02 (no content)

Senior brothers Taozi and Shancai, what should I do if I cannot write poetry? [Shan Jixiang] 20:36:32 11/25/02 (53)

If you cannot write poetry, then write prose. [Taozi] 20:47:36 11/25/02 (no content)

What if I cannot even write prose? [Shan Jixiang] 21:17:30 11/25/02 (no content)

At least you can go home and drink thin gruel. [Taozi] 21:31:09 11/25/02 (no content)

Hehe, an art of perfect appropriateness. [Shancai] 21:52:42 11/20/02 (no content)

— The Elephant’s Rope — [Shancai] 11:13:57 11/20/02 (285)

The cognitive obscurations conceal the innate, free luminosity of sentient beings. [Shancai] 16:59:04 11/20/02 (20)

Stop fooling people around here. [Bailanhu] 17:11:26 11/20/02 (8)

Would you believe a saying from my hometown? [Shancai] 22:42:48 11/20/02 (18)

— A Healthy Body Does Not Fear Infection — [Shancai] 11:12:27 11/20/02 (1K)

But what is the difference between essence and environment? [Mangzhong] 11:46:11 11/20/02 (no content)

Here, a healthy body may be understood as... [Shancai] 16:09:02 11/20/02 (388)

May I ask, good spiritual friend, what is the pure essence? [Li Wuyou] 22:09:49 11/20/02 (no content)

The good spiritual friend is not here; make your bows and withdraw. [Shancai] 22:19:15 11/20/02 (no content)

The good spiritual friend is not here—then whom do you want me to bow to? [Li Wuyou] 22:23:56 11/20/02 (no content)

Pearls are hidden in the azure sea; cranes dance in the golden sky. [Shancai] 22:33:21 11/20/02 (no content)

Where did you learn this empty affectation? [Li Wuyou] 22:45:51 11/20/02 (no content)

Hahahahaha~~~~ [Shancai] 22:48:49 11/20/02 (no content)

A lump of mud. [Bailanhu] 17:12:32 11/20/02 (no content)

Seventy-Nine: Lay Practitioner Wujin

[Original Case]

Chancellor Zhang Wujin went to the capital at the age of nineteen to sit for the examinations, passing through the Xiang family's home. That night, someone appeared in a dream to the Xiang family and said, "Tomorrow, receive the future minister." At dawn, they prepared a clean room in anticipation. By evening, they saw a poor scholar wearing a yellow Daoist robe: it was Wujin. Mr. Xiang respectfully invited him in and asked, "Where are you going, sir?" Wujin told him the truth. Xiang said, "You are not yet married. I would like to offer you my daughter to attend to your household needs." Wujin repeatedly declined out of modesty. Xiang said, "Even if this journey does not turn out as hoped, I shall not break my earlier promise." Later, Wujin indeed passed the examination and married her.

When he first served as a registrar, he entered a monastery and saw that the Buddhist scriptures, bound in Sanskrit-style folders, were arranged in perfect order. Indignantly, he said, "Are the writings of these barbarians more revered than the teachings of our sage Confucius?" That night, he sat in his study grinding ink and moistening his brush, leaning over the paper and chanting at length. He remained awake until midnight. Madame Xiang called out, "My lord, it is late at night. Why do you not go to sleep?" Wujin told her what he had in mind: he was writing On the Absence of Buddhas. Xiang immediately replied, "If there are no Buddhas, what is

there to discuss? You should instead write On the Existence of Buddhas." Wujin doubted her words and stopped.

Later, when he visited a colleague, he saw a scripture before a Buddha shrine and asked, "What text is this?" His colleague replied, "The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra." Wujin casually opened it and, upon reading the passage, "This illness is not of the earth element, yet it is not apart from the earth element," exclaimed, "Can the words of barbarians be like this as well?" He asked, "How many fascicles does this sūtra have?" The colleague replied, "Three fascicles. You may borrow it and take it home to finish reading."

Madame Xiang asked, "What book are you reading?" Wujin replied, "The Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra." Xiang said, "Read this sūtra thoroughly first, and then write On the Absence of Buddhas." Wujin was startled and found her words extraordinary.

From that point on, he deeply trusted the Buddha vehicle and devoted his attention to the Way of the patriarchs. Later, when he served as Transport Commissioner of Jiangxi, he visited masters throughout the Chan lineage. He first called upon Master Zong of Donglin Zhaojue. Zong questioned him closely about the place of his realization and found that it accorded with his own, so he confirmed Wujin's realization. He said, "A Dharma-heir of mine resides at Yuxi: this is Ci Gujing. You may also speak with him." Later, while Wujin was inspecting the region, he passed through Fenning, where the Chan masters came out to welcome him.

Upon arriving, Wujin first paid his respects to Ci of Yuxi, then to the masters of the various mountains, and finally asked about Chan Master Yue of Doushuai. Yue was small in stature. Wujin had once heard Gong Dezhuang say that he was intelligent and likable, so he said, "I have heard that you are skilled in literary composition." Yue laughed loudly and said, "The Transport Commissioner has lost one eye. I am the ninth-generation descendant of Linji. For me to discuss literature with the Transport Commissioner is precisely like the Transport Commissioner discussing Chan with me."

Wujin did not approve of what he said and reluctantly counted on his fingers: "It is indeed nine generations." He then asked, "How far is Yuxi from here?" Yue replied, "Thirty li." "And Doushuai?" "Five li." That very night, Wujin went to Doushuai.

The night before, Yue had dreamed that the disk of the sun rose into the sky, and he seized it with his hand. He told the head seat monk, "The sun disk signifies transport and movement. I have heard that Transport Commissioner Zhang will soon pass by here. I shall apply the sharp awl and hard hammer to him. If he is willing to turn back, it will be a fortunate matter for our school." The head seat monk said, "The scholar-officials of today are accustomed to being served by others. I fear he may

become angry and cause trouble." Yue said, "Even if he does become angry, the worst that can happen is that I lose this abbacy. Nothing else will happen."

While Wujin was conversing with Yue, he praised Donglin, but Yue did not accept what he said. Wujin then composed a poem at the monastery's Imitation Waterfall Pavilion, roughly as follows: "Rather than seek where it falls on Mount Lu, the elephant king's trunk vainly stirs the sky." Its meaning was to mock Yue for not acknowledging Donglin. The master slowly began speaking of matters of the Chan school. Yue said, "Today I have exhausted myself attending to worldly courtesies with the Transport Commissioner. Take care and go to sleep."

Late in the night, Yue arose and discussed this matter with Wujin: "Let us burn incense and ask the Buddhas of the ten directions to bear witness. Since Donglin has confirmed the Transport Commissioner's realization, do you have any lingering doubts about the teachings of the Buddhas and patriarchs?" Wujin replied, "I do." Yue asked, "What sayings do you doubt?" He replied, "I doubt Xiangyan's Verse on the Single Leg and the case of Deshan Carrying His Bowl."

Yue said, "Since you have doubts about these, how can you be without doubts about the rest? Take, for example, the 'final word': does it exist, or does it not exist?" Wujin replied, "It exists." Yue burst into laughter, then returned to the abbot's quarters and shut the door.

Wujin slept restlessly throughout the night. At the fifth watch, as he got out of bed, he knocked over the footstool—and suddenly awakened. He composed this verse: "The drum is silent, the bell has sunk away; he returns carrying his bowl. At Yantou's single pressing question, words crash like thunder. Surely he was granted only three more years to live—was it because he had received that prediction?" He then knocked on the abbot's door and said, "I have caught the thief!" Yue asked, "Where are the stolen goods?" Wujin had no reply. Yue said, "Commissioner, go for now. We shall meet again tomorrow."

The next day, Wujin presented the preceding verse. Yue said to him, "One investigates Chan only because the life-root has not yet been cut off and one relies on words to generate understanding. In what you have said, you have already awakened deeply. Yet at the most subtle point, one may fall into limited domains without being aware of it." Later, Yue composed a verse to verify him: "In ordinary conduct, every step is thus. Though dwelling amid sounds and forms, how could one be obstructed by existence or nonexistence?"

"The one mind does not differ; the myriad dharmas are not distinct. Do not divide essence and function; do not choose between refined and coarse. Meeting circumstances, there is no obstruction; responding to things, there is no constraint. When feelings of right and wrong are exhausted, ordinary and sage alike are

removed. Who gains? Who loses? What is near? What is distant? Taking the head as the tail, pointing to the real as empty; turning one's body in the realm of Māra, shifting one's step onto a heterodox path—when one fully understands that there is neither opposition nor compliance, one does not violate the work of practice."

Wujin invited Yue to Jianchang. Along the way, he observed him closely in every detail and composed ten verses recounting the events; Yue also responded with ten verses.

This was in the eighth month of the eighth year of the Yuanyou era.

[The Elder's Marginal Notes]

Why did he not say, "Open the door, and I will show you"? When he opened the door, he should have struck him across the back!

Why did he not say: "It is beneath the Master's feet!"

How profound these words are!

[Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight]

This Chan case is, in effect, a brief account of Layman Wujin Zhang Shangying's study of Buddhism.

The Xiang family learned of Zhang Shangying through a dream and, at their first meeting, actually promised their daughter to him. After Zhang Shangying rose rapidly to high office, he did not break the earlier agreement. This shows that he was a man who kept his word. Who was Madame Xiang? Judging from what she said at crucial moments, might she have been a bodhisattva appearing in the world? Consider her words: "If there are no Buddhas, what is there to discuss? You should instead write On the Existence of Buddhas."

At that time, Zhang Shangying's "absence of Buddhas" meant "there are no Buddhas, only sentient beings," which plainly showed that he was ignorant of the Buddhadharma. Now consider her other statement: "Read this sūtra thoroughly first, and then write On the Absence of Buddhas." Here, "absence of Buddhas" means "no Buddhas and no sentient beings," fully revealing the essence of the Buddhadharma. Encouraged and inspired by her, Zhang Shangying—who had always despised the Buddhist community—came to deeply trust the Buddha vehicle and devote his attention to the Way of the patriarchs. The causes and conditions by which Layman Wujin entered Buddhism are inconceivable!

Because Chan Master Yue of Doushuai had dreamed of seizing the sun disk, he applied the sharp awl and hard hammer fiercely to Zhang Shangying. The head seat

monk was worried for him, fearing that he would anger Zhang Shangying and bring disaster upon Doushuai. But Master Yue was entirely fearless: “If he becomes angry, at most he will prevent me from serving as abbot; he will not bring harm to the other people in the monastery.” Thus, he simply went ahead and acted.

Who would have thought that this Transport Commissioner Zhang truly was someone devoted to the Way of the patriarchs? Not only did he not become angry, but under Master Yue’s guidance at Doushuai he discovered what had not yet been thoroughly penetrated: he could not see through Xiangyan’s Verse on the Single Leg or the case of Deshan Carrying His Bowl. Then, under Master Yue’s pressing, he suddenly broke through in an instant! When he abruptly dropped the cloth bag, it was as though he had met his own father at a crossroads. He immediately composed this verse: “The drum is silent, the bell has sunk away; he returns carrying his bowl. At Yantou’s single pressing question, words crash like thunder.”

“Surely he was granted only three more years to live—was it because he had received that prediction?” Regardless of the late hour, he went and knocked on Chan Master Yue’s door at Doushuai, declaring, “I have caught the thief!” That is, he had already killed off the last remaining thread of the life-root that had not yet been severed.

Were Xiangyan’s Verse on the Single Leg and the case of Deshan Carrying His Bowl really so difficult to penetrate, requiring such tremendous effort? Certainly, this was so for Layman Wujin, but it need not be so for others. Each person has their own causes and conditions; they need not all be the same. Let us look at these two Chan cases:

Xiangyan’s Verse on the Single Leg:

Chan Master Xiangyan Zhixian composed this verse: “The chick pecks, the mother hen pecks; the chick awakens, the mother becomes the shell. Chick and mother both perish, yet the response to conditions does not err. Fellow practitioners sing in harmony; wondrously, they call it the single leg.”

The chick pecks: the student devotes himself wholeheartedly to breaking through the mass of confusion, just as a chick about to hatch pecks from inside the eggshell.

The mother hen pecks: seeing the right moment, the mother hen pecks from outside, and the chick emerges from the shell. This symbolizes a Chan master with clear vision who, seeing the right moment, gives a blow straight on the head and immediately destroys the student’s deluded thoughts and attachments.

The chick awakens; the mother becomes the shell: the chick emerges from the shell and awakens, while the mother hen falls into the shell. This symbolizes the student

who, under the teacher's encouragement, opens to the original nature in an instant, while the teacher falls into it instead. Why is this so? Have you not heard of "falling into the weeds for the sake of others"? What then is to be done? "Once the hair-blowing sword has been used, it must be sharpened at once!"

Chick and mother both perish, yet the response to conditions does not err: when the conditions for liberation are ripe, do not miss the opportunity. One must suddenly break through the boundary between teacher and student, and the wisdom without a teacher will shine forth clearly before one!

Fellow practitioners sing in harmony; wondrously, they call it the single leg: teacher and student are like fellow travelers in cultivation, one singing and the other responding. They have already become completely one; where could even the slightest discrimination remain? This wondrous function of pecking simultaneously is like breaking through the division of "two legs," and so it is called "the single leg."

Let us now look at an ancient Chan master's comments on this verse. The remarks in parentheses are my own casual comments:

Chan Master Daoxian of Wannian ascended the Dharma seat and said: "Even when the whole mechanism prevails over its opponent, one is still only halfway there. (This is because attachment to dharmas remains intact.) When pecking within and pecking without occur simultaneously, white clouds lie ten thousand miles apart. (The matter of phenomena has arisen!) As soon as the slightest sign appears, one has already fallen into two or three. (Though gold dust is precious, if it falls into the eye it becomes a cataract.) Without revealing a sharp edge, what kind of teaching could there be? (Yes! After all, one cannot simply say nothing.) Tell me, then: how should the matter transmitted from above be handled? (What, then, is to be done?) Falsely accuse someone of a crime, then add that crime to him. (Ha, ha! Now do you understand why, when "the chick awakens," the "mother" instead becomes the "shell"?)"

Chan Master Nan'yuan Huiyong addressed the assembly: "Teachers everywhere possess only the eye of simultaneous pecking from within and without; they do not possess its function." At the time, a monk asked, "What is the function of simultaneous pecking from within and without?" Nan'yuan said, "A master hand does not peck; with simultaneous pecking, it is lost." The monk said, "That is still not where this student is asking." Nan'yuan said, "Where, then, are you asking?" The monk said, "Lost." Nan'yuan then struck him.

(Everything before this was merely the shell; here comes the great peck.) The monk did not accord with it. (It was of no use; the peck was wasted.

) Later, when he came to Yunmen's assembly, two monks happened to bring up this case. One monk said, "At that time, Nan'yuan's staff was broken!" (Since it was of no use, was that not precisely why the staff was broken?) The monk suddenly awakened. (Only now did he peck his way out—eight kalpas too late!) He immediately returned to Nan'yuan, but Nan'yuan had already passed away.

At that time, Fengxue was serving as the monastic steward. He asked, "Are you the monk who asked the late master about 'simultaneous pecking from within and without'?" The monk replied, "Yes." Fengxue said, "What was it like for you at that time?" He replied, "At that time, it was as though I were walking amid lamplight and shadow. (You should have pecked your way out promptly at that time.)" Fengxue said, "You understand. (You truly are worthy to be Nan'yuan's successor. The 'shell' has broken! Quickly grind it away!)"

The Case of Deshan Carrying His Bowl:

Xuefeng was serving as cook under Deshan. One day the meal was late, and Deshan carried his bowl down from the Dharma hall. Xuefeng was airing the meal cloths when he saw Deshan and said, "The bell has not rung, and the drum has not sounded. Where are you going with your bowl?" Deshan then returned to his quarters.

Xuefeng related this to Yantou. Yantou said, "Great Deshan still has not understood the final word." When Deshan heard of this, he had an attendant summon Yantou. He asked, "You do not approve of this old monk, do you?" Yantou quietly revealed his meaning, and Deshan then let the matter rest.

The next day Deshan ascended the hall to teach, and indeed it differed from his usual manner. Yantou came before the monks' hall, clapped his hands, and laughed loudly: "What a joy that the old fellow at the head of the hall understands the final word! From now on, no one under heaven will be able to do anything with him. Even so, he has only three years left to live." Deshan indeed passed away three years later.

Earlier, in connection with the "Xiangyan One-Legged Verse," I have already said quite a lot of needless words. So I shall not be too verbose here. I will simply raise a few questions for everyone to discuss:

1. Yantou said, "Great Deshan still has not understood the final word." What is the final word?

2. Yantou quietly revealed his meaning (leaning over to whisper into Deshan's ear). What meaning did he reveal?

3. The next day, when Deshan ascended the hall, it was indeed different from usual. What was different?

4. Yantou said that Deshan had only three years left to live, and Deshan indeed entered parinirvāṇa three years later. Could it be that the master, Deshan, was inferior to his disciple, Yantou?

Let us return to Zhang Shangying. After struggling through the night, he suddenly understood. In the middle of the night, he went and knocked on Chan Master Doushuai's door, declaring, "I have caught the thief!" Chan Master Doushuai asked, "Where are the stolen goods?" He was utterly unable to reply.

The old man could not bear to watch, so he offered two replies on behalf of Layman Wujin:

1. Why not say, "Open the door, and I will show you!" When the door is opened, strike him squarely on the back! (Such a blow would be like Linji striking Huangbo.)

2. Or why not say, "Under your feet, Master!" (Ha ha! He has already stepped on it. No more mockery about "the elephant king's trunk idly probing the sky," surely.)

Seeing that he could not answer at once, Chan Master Doushuai said lightly, "It is too late today. Let us discuss it tomorrow."

The next day, Layman Wujin presented the verse he had composed.

Anyone who takes this verse to be an explanation of the case of Deshan carrying his bowl has been deceived by him. Since he had caught the thief, he had already penetrated this koan. The koan was no longer obtainable, and he could manipulate it freely. In fact, he used the circumstances of the koan in this verse to reveal his own mind-ground to Chan Master Doushuai:

"The drum is still, the bell has sunk; carrying his bowl, he returns"—a metaphor: formerly, I thought that my own "drum was still and bell had sunk," and that I had already returned home and was sitting securely.

"Yantou's single probing word was like thunder"—a metaphor: through one point from you, Master, like thunder striking the crown of my head, I came to know that I had not yet awakened thoroughly.

"Indeed, he had only three years left to live"—a metaphor: now I have caught the thief.

"Could it be that he had received a prediction from him?"—a metaphor: without your instruction, Master, how could I have penetrated this barrier?

How could Chan Master Doushuai not have known what he meant? He therefore said to Zhang Shangying: “In investigating Chan, one merely fails to sever the root of life and gives rise to understanding by relying on words. You have deeply awakened to teachings of this kind. Yet at the extremely subtle level, one unknowingly and unawares falls into confines.” He also composed this verse as confirmation: “In ordinary conduct, every step is thus. Though dwelling amid sounds and forms, how could one be stuck in being or nonbeing?

With one mind undivided, the myriad dharmas are not different. Do not distinguish essence and function; do not choose between refined and coarse. When encountering circumstances, there is no obstruction; in responding to things, there is no constraint. The feelings of right and wrong are exhausted; ordinary beings and sages alike are eliminated. Who gains and who loses? What is near and what is distant? Taking the head as the tail, pointing to the real as the unreal; turn your body and you are in the realm of Māra, shift your foot and you are on a deviant path. Fully understand neither adverse nor favorable circumstances, and do not violate the work.”

Chan Master Doushuai’s verse is precisely the patriarchal Chan that is unrelated to practice and realization, originally complete and present. The old man praised it, saying, “How profound these words are!”

Layman Wujin still had to go to Jianchang on an inspection tour, and he invited his master, Chan Master Doushuai, to go with him. Along the way, he examined the subtle points one by one in detail and wrote ten verses to express his mind-ground. Chan Master Doushuai Congyue also replied with ten verses.

The occasion on which Layman Wujin saw that Doushuai had thoroughly illuminated the mind-ground occurred in the eighth lunar month of the eighth year of the Yuanyou era of the Song dynasty.

xixi, let me explain a little. Qinglong 19:30:17 8/05/02 (549)

Please, Teacher, explain this case of Deshan carrying his bowl as well! jingke 18:19:57 8/04/02 (320)

Yantou himself already said it. lvm 20:33:04 8/04/02 (3K)

I still understand it through reasoning! jingke 22:07:09 8/04/02 (130)

Your reasoning is not wrong, but it must be directly realized. lvm 11:36:45 8/05/02 (no content)

Brother jingke, long time no see. Have you been well lately? Kangkang 19:27:57 8/04/02 (42)

You have changed your online name, haven't you? jingke 22:12:46 8/04/02 (61)

Ha ha, let me offer an answer. Big Mouse 22:30:45 8/03/02 (442)

One and manman 22:41:34 8/04/02 (518)

A question: "Great Deshan still has not understood the final word." Is this praise or criticism? Kangkang 20:36:11 8/03/02 (no content)

Great Deshan refers to Deshan, and Lesser Deshan refers to Xuefeng. lvm 21:23:09 8/03/02 (88)

80. Xinfeng Is Not Deluded

[Original Text of the Koan]

Jiashan Lin and Shishuang Lin had long studied under Chan Master Fori Zhicai. After completing their study, they traveled together in the Upper River region. When they arrived at Huanglong, they heard Venerable Nan give an informal instruction in the Dharma hall. Lin did not understand its meaning and therefore requested admission as an inner-chamber disciple. Lin became angry, beat him soundly, and left.

Later, Lin had a great awakening. His Chan repartee was sharp and untrammeled, and whenever he taught the Dharma, his manner closely resembled that of Chan Master Zhenjing, although he had never met Zhenjing.

After taking up residence at Shishuang, he gave a verse to a monk who was going to see Zhenjing. Its final line reads: "The multitudes from the four seas who come to study Chan—if they do not reach Xinfeng, they too are fools."

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

The two Chan masters Jiashan Lin (Ziling) and Shishuang Lin had both studied Chan under Chan Master Fori Zhicai of the Yunmen school. They also traveled together on pilgrimage and visited Chan Master Huanglong Huinan of the Linji school. When Chan Master Huanglong gave an instruction in the Dharma hall, Shishuang Lin could not comprehend it and asked to become Huanglong's inner-chamber disciple.

Jiashan Lin, however, may not necessarily have failed to understand. Seeing that Shishuang Lin wished to switch to the Linji school, he became angry, gave Shishuang Lin a beating, and indignantly left Huanglong. In fact, people are not necessarily all alike. If you had already attained thorough liberation under Fori Zhicai, then of course you would not need to change schools. But Shishuang Lin had not yet attained thorough liberation, so there was nothing wrong with his switching to the

Linji school. Later, Jiashan Lin did indeed inherit Fori Zhicai's Dharma lineage. He was Chan Master Ziling of Lingquan, Jiashan, Fengzhou.

Shishuang Lin studied Chan under Chan Master Huanglong and eventually had a great awakening. His Chan repartee was sharp and untrammeled, closely resembling the style of Chan Master Zhenjing. Zhenjing (that is, Venerable Wen of Dongshan) was a Dharma heir of Chan Master Huanglong. By the time Shishuang Lin was studying Chan under Huanglong, Zhenjing had already gone to serve as abbot of the Xinfeng practice center, so Shishuang Lin had never met him.

Later, Shishuang Lin also inherited Chan Master Huanglong's Dharma lineage and became abbot of the Shishuang practice center. He wrote a verse and entrusted it to a traveling monk to present to his Dharma elder brother Zhenjing, thereby expressing his admiration for Chan Master Zhenjing. The last line of this verse reads: "The multitudes from the four seas who come to study Chan—if they do not reach Xinfeng, they too are fools." Xinfeng was the practice center where Chan Master Zhenjing served as abbot.

81. Daosheng, Sengzhao, Sengrong, and Sengrui

[Original Text of the Koan]

Sheng, Zhao, Rong, and Rui were eminent disciples of Dharma Master Kumārajīva and were known as the Four Reliant Bodhisattvas. Once, while they were jointly explaining the Vimalakīrti Sūtra with Kumārajīva, they all laid down their brushes upon reaching the chapter "The Inconceivable." Since this state lies beyond the reach of thought and speech, they could not put a single word to it.

When Elder Li commented on "Entering the Avataṃsaka Dharma Realm," he analyzed each word and explained each sentence, as clearly as the sun and stars, leaving no room for doubt. Had he not personally encountered the conditions for complete realization, how could he have done so?

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

Zhu Daosheng, Sengzhao, Daorong, and Sengrui were disciples of the renowned eminent monk Kumārajīva. People honored them as the Four Sages of Guanzhong.

The Four Reliances are: rely on the Dharma, not on persons; rely on the meaning, not on words; rely on wisdom, not on consciousness; and rely on definitive meaning, not on nondefinitive meaning. The Four Reliant Bodhisattvas are mentioned in the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra: in the final age of the Buddhadharma, there will be four such bodhisattvas upon whom sentient beings may rely. That is to say, sentient

beings in the latter age who study Buddhism must rely on teachers who expound the Dharma according to the principles of the Four Reliances.

Since Sheng, Zhao, Rong, and Rui were known as the “Four Reliant Bodhisattvas,” it is evident that the four enjoyed great prestige in the Buddhist world of their time. Zhu Daosheng, the foremost among them, was renowned for the saying, “When Master Sheng expounded the Dharma, even stubborn stones nodded their heads.”

Yet when the four of them annotated the Vimalakīrti Sūtra together with their teacher, Dharma Master Kumārajīva, they could proceed no further upon reaching the chapter “The Inconceivable.” In this state, the way of words is cut off and the path of mental activity comes to an end. Even these great masters of the doctrinal schools could not set brush to paper here. Master Daosheng once encountered Chan Master Qin Baduo; consider their dialogue:

Chan Master Qin Baduo asked Dharma Master Daosheng: “Which sūtra or treatise are you lecturing on?” Sheng replied: “The Great Prajñā Sūtra.” The master asked: “How do you explain the meaning of form and emptiness?” Sheng replied: “A collection of minute particles is called form; the lack of inherent nature in those particles is called emptiness.” The master asked: “Before the minute particles have gathered, what do you call it?” Sheng was at a loss for words. The master again asked: “What other sūtra or treatise do you lecture on?” Sheng replied: “The Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra.”

The master asked: “How do you explain the meaning of nirvāṇa?” Sheng replied: “Ni means not arising, and pan means not ceasing. Because it neither arises nor ceases, it is called nirvāṇa.”

The master asked: “That is the Tathāgata’s nirvāṇa. Which is the Dharma master’s nirvāṇa?” Sheng replied: “How could there be two meanings of nirvāṇa? This is all I can say. May I ask how the Chan master explains nirvāṇa?” The master picked up a ruyi and asked: “Do you see it?” Sheng replied: “I see it.” The master asked: “What do you see?” Sheng replied: “I see the ruyi in the Chan master’s hand.”

The master threw the ruyi to the ground and asked: “Do you see it?” Sheng replied: “I see it.” The master asked: “What do you see?” Sheng replied: “I see the ruyi in the Chan master’s hand falling to the ground.” The master rebuked him: “Judging by your understanding, you have not gone beyond the ordinary run. How can your name resound throughout the universe?” Then he shook his sleeves and departed.

Daosheng’s disciples remained deeply doubtful, so they pursued the master and asked: “Our teacher’s explanation of form, emptiness, and nirvāṇa did not accord with yours. How, then, does the Chan master explain the meaning of form and emptiness?” The master said: “It is not that your teacher’s explanation was wrong.

Your teacher only explained form and emptiness at the level of fruition; he did not know how to explain form and emptiness within the cause." The disciples asked: "What are form and emptiness within the cause?" The master said: "Because one minute particle is empty, all minute particles are empty; because all minute particles are empty, one minute particle is empty. Within the emptiness of one minute particle there are no multitude of particles; within the emptiness of the multitude of particles there is no single particle."

Qin Baduo set forth the meaning of form and emptiness in its entirety, without the slightest obstruction of theory. The Chan master truly relied on meaning rather than on words.

Elder Li of the Tang dynasty was named Li Tongxuan and came from Cangzhou. It is said that he belonged to the same clan as the emperor of his time. Emperor Huizong of the Song bestowed on him the title "Elder of Sublime Adornment in Exoteric Buddhism."

His writings include the forty-volume New Commentary on the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, the fourteen-volume Commentary and Explanation of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, the four-volume A Brief Explanation of the New Commentary on the Stages of Practice in the Avataṃsaka Sūtra and the Resolution of Doubts, as well as The Ten Mysteries and Six Characteristics, The Ocean of Meaning in a Hundred Gates, The Gate of Samantabhadra Practice, and Contemplation of the Avataṃsaka. When Elder Li explained "Entering the Avataṃsaka Dharma Realm," he analyzed each word and explained each sentence, as clearly as the sun and stars, leaving no room for doubt. Had he not directly realized it and thoroughly understood it himself, how could he have explained it so clearly?

The Buddhadharma can be thoroughly understood only through direct realization. Relying solely on the study of theory leads one to become stuck in theory; that is not genuine understanding.

Heh heh. If the teacher were Sheng and answered in this way, would that count as wrong? Dreaming Fool 17:00:09 8/06/02 (no content)

If you were Sheng, how would you answer? lvm 20:21:44 8/06/02 (no content)

I would still answer him this way. Teacher, what do you say? Casually pick up the ruyi and put it back in place. Dreaming Fool 13:44:13 8/07/02 (no content)

If he asked, "Do you see it?" answer him: "The moment you see it, you are blind!" lvm 16:10:08 8/07/02 (no content)

Yes! I am speaking up for Dharma Master Daosheng. Heh heh. Dreaming Fool 16:42:19 8/07/02 (1K)

So it turns out that all the patriarchs' nostrils point downward! Teacher, please comment. Shangchi 15:37:53 8/05/02 (196)

These too are merely theories. Seeing the ruyi fall to the ground is what it means to set it forth in its entirety. lvm 23:52:47 8/05/02 (no content)

May the teacher explain the meaning of nirvāṇa in the ruyi's falling to the ground. Shangchi 06:51:40 8/06/02 (no content)

If one could explain it as it is explained above, the Chan master would not have needed to hold up the ruyi. lvm 12:03:17 8/06/02 (96)

Hee hee. x 17:26:07 8/06/02 (67)

Since the Chan master did hold it up, why not explain it, teacher? Shangchi 15:24:00 8/06/02 (40)

I do not know how at this point either. lvm 16:05:19 8/06/02 (no content)

So it turns out that it is "not knowing"— Shangchi 17:19:34 8/06/02 (no content)

Not knowing is most intimate. lvm 17:24:21 8/06/02 (no content)

! Dreaming Fool 17:34:13 8/06/02 (no content)

Master LVM, I am a little afraid to ask: 99477 12:22:12 8/14/02 (60)

What function do you think it ought to have? lvm 13:17:29 8/14/02 (no content)

What the master says is truly excellent!!! 99477 13:34:40 8/14/02 (no content)

Eighty-Two: Great Wisdom Investigates Chan

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Mingji Cheng of Xuanzhou visited leading venerable masters of the previous generation far and wide, including Langya, Xuedou, and Tianyi, serving them all and requesting instruction in the Dharma. When he began teaching publicly, he succeeded Reverend Tan of Xingjiao, who in turn had succeeded Langya. Later he moved to Ruizhu in Taipingzhou and retired to the Western Hall. When the Master first traveled in search of instruction, he followed Cheng and asked for guidance on Xuedou's Verses on Ancient Cases and Comments on Ancient Cases. Cheng instructed him to examine the causes and conditions for himself: in every case he was to see for himself and speak for himself, without borrowing others' words. The Master thoroughly penetrated the subtle intent of the ancient sages.

Cheng often praised him before the assembly, saying, “Gao must be one who has returned again.”

He later traveled to Dayang in Yingzhou, where he met Head Seat Yuan, Reverend Wei of Dongshan, and Head Seat Jian. Wei had served as head of the assembly in the community of Furong, and Jian had been an attendant for more than ten years. The Master spent a long time with these three elders and fully grasped the essential teachings of the Caodong school. At the time of transmission, they all burned incense on their arms to signify that the transmission was not given casually. The Master reflected: “If Chan has transmission, how can it be the Dharma personally realized and awakened to by the Buddhas and patriarchs?” He abandoned them and relied on Zhan Tang.

One day, Zhan Tang asked, “Why is half of your nostril missing today?” He replied, “Under Baofeng’s gate.” Zhan Tang said, “You fabricated Chan practitioner.” On another day, before an image of the Ten Kings, he asked, “What is this official’s surname?” He replied, “Liang.” Zhan Tang touched his own head with his hand and said, “But one surnamed Liang lacks an official’s headcloth.”

He replied, “Though there is no official’s headcloth, the nostrils are much the same.” Zhan Tang said, “You fabricated Chan practitioner.” On another occasion, while he was reading a sūtra, Zhan Tang asked, “What sūtra are you reading?” He replied, “The Diamond Sūtra.” Zhan Tang said, “All dharmas are equal, without high or low. Why, then, is Mount Yunju high and Mount Baofeng low?” He replied, “All dharmas are equal, without high or low.”

Zhan Tang said, “You could make a sūtra lecturer,” and dismissed him. One day, he asked, “Gao, here in my Chan, you understand everything at once. If I tell you to speak, you can speak; if I tell you to compose comments on ancient cases, verses on ancient cases, informal talks, or general lectures, you can do so.”

“There is only one thing you have not yet attained. Do you know what it is?” He replied, “What is it?” Zhan Tang said, “You are still lacking this one realization—[illegible phrase]! If you do not attain this realization, then when I speak with you in my abbot’s quarters, there is Chan; as soon as you leave the abbot’s quarters, there is none. When you are alert and pondering, there is Chan; as soon as you fall asleep, there is none. If this is so, how can you withstand birth and death?” He replied, “That is precisely where my doubt lies.”

Later, when Zhan Tang fell ill, he urgently asked, “If Your Reverence does not recover from this illness, whom should I rely upon in order to resolve this great matter?” He said, “There is a fellow named Qin; I have not met him either. If you meet him, he will certainly be able to bring this matter to completion. If, after meeting him, you still do not attain it, then go cultivate, and in a future life come forth again to study Chan.”

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

People today who study Chan generally think that once they understand a few koans and can speak fluently about them, they have awakened to the Way. In fact, they have not! When speaking, there is something; when acting, there is nothing. When awake, there is something; when asleep, there is nothing. How can they withstand birth and death?

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

This koan is practically a brief biography of Chan Master Dahui Zonggao's study of Chan. He studied Chan with many great masters of both the Caodong and Linji schools. For clarity, the lineage is set out below:

Head Seat Yuan

Caodong school: Touzi Yiqing Furong Daokai Dongshan Wei

Head Seat Jian

Shishuang Chuyuan Huanglong Huinan Zhenjing Kewen Zhan Tang Wenzhun

Linji school: Fenyang Shanzhao Yangqi Fanghui Baiyun Shouduan Wuzu Fayan Yuanwu Keqin Dahui Zonggao

Langya Huijue Xingjiao Tan Mingji Cheng

Dahui Zonggao first studied Chan with Chan Master Mingji Cheng. He asked Mingji Cheng about the causes and conditions in Xuedou's Verses on Ancient Cases and Comments on Ancient Cases. Master Cheng told him to examine the original koans himself, to see for himself and offer his own responses, rather than repeat the responses of others. Dahui followed these instructions and thereby thoroughly penetrated the subtle intent of the ancient Chan masters. Before the assembly, Mingji Cheng praised Dahui Zonggao, saying, "Gao must be one who has returned again."

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao also went to study Chan under Chan Master Furong Daokai of the Caodong school. Head Seat Yuan, Dongshan Wei, and Head Seat Jian were all outstanding disciples under Master Furong. Dahui spent a long time with these three elders and fully grasped the essential teachings of the Caodong school. Later, he saw that, in the Caodong school's bestowal of Dharma transmission, incense was burned on the arm, leaving a scar, to signify that the transmission was not bestowed casually. He thought, "If Chan has transmission, how can it be the Dharma personally realized and awakened to by the Buddhas and patriarchs?" He

therefore left the Caodong school and went to stay with Reverend Zhan Tang of the Linji school.

On one occasion, Zhan Tang asked him, “Why is half of your nostril missing today?”—rather like asking, “How are my feet like a donkey’s feet?”

He replied, “Under Baofeng’s gate.”—Zhan Tang’s teacher was Chan Master Zhenjing Kewen of Baofeng. Is this not precisely “under Baofeng’s gate”?

Zhan Tang said, “You fabricated Chan practitioner.”—Ha ha! How did you fabricate that reply?

On another occasion, pointing to images of the Ten Kings of Hell, Zhan Tang asked him, “What is this official’s surname?”—He governs birth and death; can you pass through his checkpoint?

He replied, “Liang.”—Chan Master Zhan Tang’s lay surname was Liang.

Zhan Tang touched his own head with his hand and said, “But one surnamed Liang lacks an official’s headcloth.”—I do not govern birth and death in the underworld; you must rely on yourself to resolve birth and death.

He replied, “Though there is no official’s headcloth, the nostrils are much the same.”—Though you do not govern birth and death in the underworld, you possess the true eye for transcending birth and death.

Zhan Tang said, “You fabricated Chan practitioner.”—You are truly good at making things up.

While Dahui was reading a sūtra, Zhan Tang asked him, “What sūtra are you reading?”—Do not let the sūtra read you instead.

He replied, “The Diamond Sūtra.”—The Sixth Patriarch awakened upon hearing the Diamond Sūtra.

Zhan Tang said, “All dharmas are equal, without high or low. Why, then, is Mount Yunju high and Mount Baofeng low?”—He was seeing whether Dahui’s mind made distinctions of high and low.

He replied, “All dharmas are equal, without high or low.”—That Mount Yunju is high and Mount Baofeng low is precisely “all dharmas are equal, without high or low.”

Zhan Tang said, “You could make a sūtra lecturer,” and then sent him away.—This is what is explained below: “Here in my Chan, you understand everything at once. If I tell you to speak, you can speak; if I tell you to compose comments on ancient cases, verses on ancient cases, informal talks, or general lectures, you can do so.”

At last, one day, Chan Master Zhan Tang showed his hand: “Gao, here in my Chan, you understand everything at once. If I tell you to speak, you can speak; if I tell you to compose comments on ancient cases, verses on ancient cases, informal talks, or general lectures, you can do so. There is only one matter still lacking. Do you know what it is?”—Do you know this matter?

He replied, “What matter?”—It turned out that he did not know.

Zhan Tang said, “You are still lacking this one realization—[illegible phrase]! If you do not attain this realization, then when I speak with you in my abbot’s quarters, there is Chan; as soon as you leave the abbot’s quarters, there is none. When you are alert and pondering, there is Chan; as soon as you fall asleep, there is none. If this is so, how can you withstand birth and death?”—This matter is of great importance: one’s Dharma body and wisdom-life depend upon it.

He replied, “That is precisely where my doubt lies.”—Yes! This is exactly what I have been doubting.

When Chan Master Zhan Tang grew old and ill, Dahui Zonggao became anxious and asked the old master, “If Your Reverence does not recover from this illness, whom should I rely upon in order to resolve this great matter?” Zhan Tang said, “There is a fellow named Qin; I have not met him either. If you meet him, he will certainly be able to bring this matter to completion. If, after meeting him, you still do not attain it, then go cultivate, and in a future life come forth again to study Chan.”—Cultivation is not the same as realizing the Way. The Way lies in awakening, not in cultivation.

Later, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao finally found this “fellow named Qin”—Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu Keqin—and finally resolved this matter completely under Yuanwu. Dahui then inherited Yuanwu’s Dharma robe and bowl.

Look! How solidly and practically the ancients studied Chan, whereas Chan practitioners today are for the most part superficial. The Elder lamented: “People today who study Chan generally think that once they understand a few koans and can speak fluently about them, they have awakened to the Way. In fact, they have not! When speaking, there is something; when acting, there is nothing. When awake, there is something; when asleep, there is nothing. How can they withstand birth and death?”

83. Baoning Sets His Resolve

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Yong of Baoning was a native of Siming. When he first changed into monastic robes, he relied on Chan Master Xian of Xuedou in seeking the Way. Xuedou rebuked him as a "yangxiang lecturer"! Yong did not take this to heart. As soon as he had completed the hall etiquette, he packed up his belongings and, facing Mount Xuedou, made prostrations and vowed: "In this life, as I travel and study Chan, if my standing in the Way does not surpass that of Xuedou, I shall never return to my native place!" Yong then went to Yungai in Changsha, where he paid a visit to Master Hui of Yangqi. He was a Dharma brother of Master Duan of Baiyun. Later, he began teaching publicly and resided at Baoning.

Yong's reputation in the Chan communities spread far and wide, just as he had said. If one has such resolve, how can one fail to establish it?

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

This koan concerns the importance of rousing one's resolve and determination, encouraging practitioners to develop firm faith in the Way. Yet once one has aroused a forceful aspiration for the Way, one must let go of everything and not be anxious for quick results. I often see fellow practitioners whose initial resolve is quite forceful, but who soon become impatient. Unwilling to go deeply into a single method, they are often eager to enter retreat, eager to undertake a seven-day retreat, and eager to find a shortcut. In fact, the more hurried one is, the slower one becomes; the more one seeks, the farther away one gets.

Because Chan Master Yong of Baoning was rebuked by Xuedou as a "yangxiang lecturer," he immediately aroused great courage and determination. Facing Mount Xuedou, he made prostrations and vowed: "In this life, as I travel and study Chan, if my standing in the Way does not surpass that of Xuedou, I shall never return to my native place!" Two points here require attention: first, he made prostrations toward Mount Xuedou; second, his standing in the Way had to surpass that of Xuedou.

Chan Master Yong of Baoning demonstrated his standing in the Way through his own genuine practice and realization. Not only did he refrain from attacking Xuedou; he instead made prostrations toward Mount Xuedou. Nowadays, some people seek standing in the Way by attacking others. In fact, this only leads them farther and farther into contention, like washing something until it becomes dirtier and dirtier. Later, Chan Master Yong of Baoning's reputation spread throughout the Chan communities, and he indeed fulfilled his aspiration.

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao praised him, saying: "If one has such resolve, how can one fail to establish it?"

Does "yangxiang lecturer" mean someone who can only engage in scholarly learning? Shancai 20:04:25, 8/07/02 (no content)

In ancient times, local schools (private academies) were called xiang ( ). lvm 21:42:53 8/07/02(60)

Eighty-Four: The Earth Deity Guards the Stupa

[Original Koan]

The former master of Huanglong Mountain built the monastic compound entirely in accordance with the standards of a Chan monastery. Someone laughed and said, “Venerable, you do not even understand Chan. Why build it this way?” Huanglong replied, “There will naturally be someone who can teach Chan.” When the monastery was completed, he respectfully invited Chan Master Nan of Jicui to serve as abbot. Later, the former Huanglong passed away.

One night, Chan Master Nan suddenly dreamed that a spirit said, “I beg to be allowed to guard the stūpa.” Chan Master Nan paid it no heed. One day, while sitting in the abbot’s quarters, he again saw the person from his dream, who said, “I, so-and-so, wish to guard the stūpa.” When Master Nan questioned him, he said, “Someone will come to make the arrangements.” Before long, a statue maker indeed arrived. Master Nan instructed him to make another image of the earth deity. The old earth-deity image was then moved to guard the stūpa of the former Huanglong.

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

At the place where Huanglong Huinan, the founding patriarch of the Huanglong branch of the Linji school, resided, there had previously been another abbot. Although this man did not understand Chan, the monastery he built conformed in every respect to the layout of a Chan monastic community. Someone mocked him: “You do not understand Chan, so why build it in this way?” He replied, “Someone who can teach Chan will naturally come.”

After the monastery was completed, he invited Chan Master Huanglong Huinan to serve as abbot. Later generations referred to the builder of the Huanglong monastery as the “Former Huanglong.” After the Former Huanglong passed away, Chan Master Nan, in commemoration of his merit in building the monastery, erected a stūpa as an offering—a stūpa for him.

Then one night, Chan Master Nan dreamed that the earth deity requested permission to guard the stūpa, but he paid it no heed. A few days later, while Master Nan was sitting in the abbot’s quarters, the earth deity from the dream again appeared and requested permission to guard the stūpa. This time it was not a dream, and it drew Master Nan’s attention, so he questioned the deity closely. The earth deity said, “Someone will come to make the arrangements.” Before long, a

statue maker arrived. Chan Master Nan asked him to move the old image of the earth deity to the stūpa precincts to guard the Former Huanglong's stūpa, and to make another image of the earth deity for the original location.

Eighty-Five: Do Not Create Negative Karma of Speech

[Original Koan]

Tai Liu, a monastic from Shu, lived among the assembly and often lamented that the Buddhadharma had become muddled and adulterated, with divergent views arising in sharp contention. He therefore said, "If, through my Chan practice, I attain genuine understanding and insight, I will not spare myself the karma of speech." He then vowed to pay homage at Mazu's stūpa without interruption throughout the year. One day, the stūpa suddenly emitted a white light, and he was moved to awakening. Thereafter, wherever he went among Chan monasteries, he tested the senior masters.

As he passed before Mount Xuedou, he said, "That old fellow's mouth is dripping with water." When Xuedou heard this, he seemed displeased. When Tai later met Xuedou, Xuedou said, "You do not approve of this old monk?" Tai said, "That old fellow's mouth is indeed dripping with water." He struck his sitting cloth once and left.

The monastery steward was indignant and had someone beat Tai on the road, crippling one of Tai's feet. Tai said, "This was ordered by that old fellow Xuedou. One day he must break a foot to repay me." Later, it happened just as he had said.

After Tai arrived in the capital, he behaved freely in the marketplaces. An official invited him home to make offerings to him. Tai repeatedly asked to take his leave, but the official insisted on keeping him and treated him with ever greater reverence, often having his concubines bring food before him. One day, when the official happened to arrive, Tai deliberately flirted with one of his concubines. The official then changed his manner of reverence, and Tai was thus able to depart. A few days later, he sat upright in the busy market and passed away.

[The Elder's Marginal Notes]

Do not say that the Buddhas and patriarchs lack spiritual efficacy; fear only that practitioners' hearts are not firm and sincere!

Xuedou, Xuedou—he still has this!

What sort of person was this monastery steward, to resort to such a low tactic?

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

There was a monastic teacher from Sichuan named Tai Liu. Seeing that the Buddhadharma had become muddled and adulterated, with everyone advancing divergent views, he made this great vow: “If, through my Chan practice, I attain genuine understanding and insight, I will not spare myself the karma of speech.” He then paid homage at Mazu’s stūpa year after year. Finally, one day, the stūpa emitted a white light, and he suddenly awakened. From then on, he went to Chan monasteries to test the old masters. Ha ha! Indeed, diligent effort does not fail one who is determined.

The Elder sighed, “Do not say that the Buddhas and patriarchs lack spiritual efficacy; fear only that practitioners’ hearts are not firm and sincere!” Indeed! Most people today lack firmness and sincerity, yet complain that the Buddhadharma has no efficacy. They always want to buy a large color television for a penny—how could that possibly be done?

Tai Liu came to Chan Master Xuedou and commented on him: “That old fellow’s mouth is dripping with water”—criticizing Chan Master Xuedou for talking too much nonsense. Chan Master Xuedou asked him, “You do not approve of this old monk?” He replied, “That old fellow’s mouth is indeed dripping with water.” He struck his sitting cloth once and left.

Xuedou actually asked, “You do not approve of this old monk?” Did he expect Tai to approve of him? The Elder also criticized Xuedou: “Xuedou, Xuedou—he still has this!” What is this? It is wanting others to approve of him. Chan Master Deshan also said, “You do not approve of this old monk?” but he said it to his disciple Yantou. Tai Liu was not Xuedou’s disciple, so it was inappropriate for Xuedou to say this to Tai Liu. It exposed precisely that he still had “this”!

When the monastery steward saw that Tai Liu did not approve of Xuedou, he was very dissatisfied. He actually gave rise to anger and had someone intercept Tai Liu on the road and beat him, crippling one of Tai Liu’s feet. Tai Liu said, “This must have been instigated by that old fellow Xuedou. Later, he must break one foot to repay me.” Later, Chan Master Xuedou indeed became crippled in one foot.

This was all trouble that the monastery steward brought upon Xuedou. The Elder rebuked the steward: “What sort of person was this monastery steward, to resort to such a low tactic?” If others do not approve of you and you then harm them, that is of course a low tactic. If you seek others’ approval, you must be like Chan Master Baoning Yong in the preceding koan: exert yourself, establish your resolve, and improve your own qualities. That is the superior course.

Tai Liu came to the capital and behaved uninhibitedly in the busy marketplaces. An official invited him home to make offerings to him. Tai Liu wished to take his leave, but the official treated him with even greater reverence and forcibly kept him there. Tai Liu wanted to test whether the official's reverence was genuine, so he devised a plan: before the official's eyes, he flirted with one of the official's concubines. The official was displeased (he had failed the test) and instead invited other monks. Tai Liu then left the official's home. Ten-odd days later, Tai Liu sat upright in the busy market and passed away.

[Related Links] (Click: Close/Open) [Related Links] (Click: Close/Open) [Related Links] (Click: Close/Open)

The Elder did not spare himself the karma of speech—I pay homage to the Elder! Grass Bandit 11:08:20 8/11/02 (14K)

Was it really instigated by Chan Master Xuedou? Why did he break his foot? lixy 01:15:40 8/11/02 (no content)

Ha ha! In any case, it was not instigated by you, nor by me. lvm 09:00:59 8/11/02 (49)

Alas! At such a time as this, is not Tai Liu truly a model for the Buddha's disciples?! etum 18:41:27 8/15/02 (no content)

86. The Yaksha's Prophecy

[Original Text of the Koan]

Attendant Ping of Dayang had long been admitted to Ming'an's inner circle. Although he had fully grasped the purport of his teaching, he made arising and ceasing his sole concern: he pushed down and entrapped his fellow practitioners and resented anyone who surpassed him.

When Langye Guangzhao and Gong'an Yuanjian were living among the assembly, Chan Master Fenyang had them investigate Ming'an's essential teaching. At Dayang, Ping secretly instructed them. Ming'an once said, "To revive the Caodong lineage, it will be either Yuan or Jue." The two masters said, "But Attendant Ping is there." Ming'an pointed to his chest and said, "Ping is not good here." He then pinched the space between his thumb and forefinger and showed it to them, saying, "Ping will one day die here."

When Ming'an entered quiescence, he left these final instructions: "If my whole body remains intact for ten years without decay, offerings should be made for Dayang Mountain." When he was placed in the stūpa, his disciples feared that Ping might harm their master. They therefore made an inscription on the stūpa stating that it

contained gold and silver vessels donated by Commandant Li Hewen, though in fact there were none. Afterward, when Ping resided at Dayang, he suddenly declared that his former master's stūpa had unfavorable geomantic conditions and ordered it to be exhumed and burned.

The senior elders of the mountain earnestly remonstrated with Ping, but Ping said, "It is an impediment to me." He then opened the stūpa. The master's countenance was as lifelike as when he was alive. Even after the firewood had burned out, the body remained perfectly intact, and everyone was astonished. Ping then split open his skull with a hoe, added oil and firewood, and before long it was reduced to ashes. The assembly reported the matter to the authorities. Ping was convicted of plotting to obtain the objects in the stūpa, of filial impiety, and was returned to lay status.

Ping called himself Scholar Huang and paid a visit to Langye. Langye said, "Attendant Ping of former days is Scholar Huang today. When I was at Dayang, I saw what you were doing!" He therefore refused to accept him. Ping also visited Gong'an, but Gong'an likewise ignored him. Ping wandered about with nowhere to rely upon. Later, at a three-way crossroads, he was eaten by a tiger. In the end, he could not escape Dayang's prophecy concerning the tiger's jaws. How tragic!

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

Though he spoke in a similar way, he still lacked the realization that there is nothing to attain. Inevitably, he was burdened by deluded habits accumulated over countless kalpas, created karma, and fell into degeneration. Should this not serve as a profound warning to us?

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

In A Brief Discussion of Realizing the Mind and Seeing One's True Nature, the Elder mentioned this attendant, Dayang Ping, as an example of one who betrayed his teacher; here he speaks of him again. This Chan koan says: "Attendant Dayang Ping had long been in Master Ming'an's quarters. Although he had fully grasped the Master's meaning, he took arising and ceasing as his own concern, oppressed and ensnared his peers, and was jealous of anyone who surpassed him." The Elder commented: "Though he spoke in a similar way, he still lacked the realization that there is nothing to attain. Inevitably, he was burdened by deluded habits accumulated over countless kalpas, created karma, and fell into degeneration."

The Elder's comments correspond point by point to what this koan says:

"Fully grasped his meaning"—though he spoke in a similar way, he still lacked the realization that there is nothing to attain. (Only non-attainment is true attainment.)

“He made arising and ceasing his sole concern and resented anyone who surpassed him”—these were deluded habits accumulated over countless kalpas.

“He pushed down and entrapped his fellow practitioners”—he created karma and fell into decline. Eventually, this developed into “betraying his master.”

Ming'an in this koan was Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan. Chan Master Liangshan Yuanguan, mentioned in koan no. 68, “Tilting Ravines and Overturning Mountains,” was his teacher. Langye Guangzhao was Chan Master Huijue Guangzhao of Langye Mountain in Chuzhou, a Dharma heir of Chan Master Fenyang Shanzhao.

Gong'an Yuanjian was Chan Master Fushan Fayuan Yuanjian of Shuzhou, a Dharma heir of Chan Master Yexian Guisheng. As mentioned in koan no. 9, “Unyielding Despite a Hundred Setbacks,” Fushan Fayuan, entrusted by Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan, found an outstanding successor for the master many years after the master entered quiescence: Touzi Yiqing.

To make the Dharma-lineage relationships among these many figures clear at a glance, their lineage chart is set out below:

Fenyang Shanzhao Langye Huijue …

Fifth generation of the Linji school: Shoushan Shenglian

Yexian Guisheng Fushan Fayuan …

Fifth generation of the Caodong school: Liangshan Yuanguan Dayang Jingxuan Touzi Yiqing …

Attendant Ping

Ming'an once said, “To revive the Caodong lineage, it will be either Yuan or Jue.” Yuan was Fushan Fayuan, and Jue was Langye Huijue. The two said, “But Attendant Ping is there.” Ming'an pointed to his chest and said, “Ping is not good here.” That is, Attendant Ping’s heart was bad; he was not a good person. Ming'an then pinched the space between his thumb and forefinger and showed it to them, saying, “Ping will one day die here.” The space between the thumb and forefinger is called the tiger’s jaws. Attendant Ping would later die in a tiger’s jaws—he would be eaten by a tiger.

Before Chan Master Ming'an entered quiescence, he left these final instructions: “If my whole body remains intact for ten years without decay, offerings should be made for Dayang Mountain.” If my whole body remains undamaged for ten years,

this will show that Dayang Mountain has favorable geomantic conditions, and offerings should be established to honor Dayang Mountain. He said this in order to restrain Attendant Ping. If Ping did not commit grave evil within those ten years, perhaps he could avoid dying in a tiger's jaws.

The disciples also falsely claimed that gold and silver donated by Commandant Li Hewen had been sealed in the stūpa, in order to restrain Attendant Ping. How could they have imagined that, out of greed for gold and silver, Ping would dare to outrage all under heaven by opening the stūpa and burning his master? His evil deeds had reached their limit. Because he burned his master, he faced criminal charges and was reduced to commoner status.

After Attendant Ping fell into destitution, he had nowhere to go and could only seek refuge with Langye Huijue and Fushan Fayuan. These two Chan masters understood his character well and neither would take him in. He could only wander from place to place and was eventually eaten by a tiger at a three-way crossroads. This precisely fulfilled Chan Master Ming'an's prophecy concerning the tiger's jaws.

We must take warning from the overturning of the cart before us. For this reason, the Elder admonishes us: "Should we not take this as a profound warning to ourselves?"

A question for Teacher LVM: Mangzhong, 13:15:44, 8/13/02 (125)

Here, "arising and ceasing" means stirring up incidents and eliminating dissidents. LVM, 13:22:09, 8/13/02 (no content)

How great is cause and effect! Those who create causes and effects—do they not have troubles to worry about?! Should they not be cautious? Caokou, 12:11:09, 8/11/02 (10)

87. Crow Stench on the Wind

[Original Text of the Koan]

Emei's Elder Bai once said: "My fellow townsman Xuedou has written more than a hundred verses. Their wording and meaning are not especially outstanding; how has he gained such an undeserved reputation in the world?" He therefore composed a thousand verses, believing that ten times as many would be superior. He compiled them into a collection himself, vainly imagining that one day his fame would eclipse Xuedou's. Everywhere he went, he sought people who could appreciate them.

There was a Daihe Mountain Master who had visited eminent elders of the age who possessed the Way. He had received the Dharma from Chan Master Yiyu of Fachang

and later emerged to teach at Daihe, where he was known as the Mountain Master. His bearing overshadowed all quarters, and he did not lightly grant approval. Bai brought his verses to pay him a visit, seeking a single evaluative word that would inspire confidence among later students. When Daihe saw them, he spat and said: “These verses are like someone afflicted with foul underarm odor, standing in the wind—the stench is unbearable.” From then on, Bai no longer dared show them to anyone.

Later, when Huang Luzhi heard of this, he went to Daci Temple in Chengdu and wrote in large characters on a wall: “Emei’s Elder Bai compiled a collection of a thousand verses. Daihe once remarked: ‘One with underarm odor stands in the wind.’”

[Sawing Open the Scale Weight]

Emei’s Elder Bai and Chan Master Xuedou were fellow townsmen. Seeing that the book Xuedou’s One Hundred Cases of Raising the Ancient and Verses on the Ancient had swept through Chan monasteries, he was quite dismissive of it. He said that the meaning of its one hundred verses was not especially remarkable (ha! Perhaps he simply could not understand them). He then wrote a thousand verses, believing that ten times as many would be superior. He compiled them into a collection himself, vainly imagining that his fame would later eclipse Xuedou’s. Carrying his thousand verses with him, he went everywhere seeking people to appraise them.

Daihe Mountain Master, a Dharma heir of Chan Master Yiyu of Fachang in the Yunmen school, had visited eminent elders of the age who possessed the Way. His bearing overshadowed all quarters, and he did not readily approve of others. Having heard of Daihe Mountain Master’s reputation, Elder Bai actually brought his thousand verses to Daihe for appraisal, seeking a word of affirmation from the Mountain Master so that later students would gain confidence in these “Thousand Verses on Ancient Cases.” Daihe took one look and said, “Pah! These verses are like someone afflicted with foul underarm odor, standing in the wind—the stench is unbearable.” Elder Bai was thoroughly rebuffed and never again dared ask anyone to appraise them.

When Huang Luzhi (Huang Tingjian, the Grand Historian) heard of this, he found it highly amusing. At Daci Temple in Chengdu, he wrote a verse in large characters on a wall: “Emei’s Elder Bai compiled a collection of a thousand verses. Daihe once remarked: ‘One with underarm odor stands in the wind.’”

Needless to ask, Elder Bai’s Thousand Verses on Ancient Cases must have been crudely made, poorly written, and lacking a clear eye of the Way. How could they have been as penetrating and free as Xuedou’s One Hundred Verses on Ancient Cases? Chan Master Yuanwu of Foguo said in The Blue Cliff Record: “Xuedou

composed verses on one hundred koans, bringing forth each one with incense burning; this is why they became so widely known in the world. Moreover, he was skilled in literary composition and thoroughly penetrated the koans.

Only after mulling them over until they are fully mature may one set brush to paper. Why is this so? Dragons and snakes are easy to distinguish, but patch-robed monks are not easily deceived." Indeed, if verses are well composed, they will naturally become widely known; there is no need to seek appraisers everywhere. Dragons and snakes are easy to distinguish, but patch-robed monks are not easily deceived.

Eighty-Eight: Reincarnation of Living Buddhas

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Guizong Xuan was from Hanzhou. He was a Dharma successor of Langya Guangzhao and a close friend of Guo Gongfu. One day, when the prefect of Nankang came to press him over some matter, Xuan had someone rush a letter to Gongfu and instructed the messenger, "Do not let the county magistrate see it." Gongfu was then serving as a judicial officer in Nanchang. The letter said: "I still have six years of worldly affinity remaining. Today, I can no longer endure this coercion. I wish to take rebirth in your household; I hope you will look after me." He then passed away.

When Gongfu received the letter, he was filled with astonishment and joy. At midnight, his wife dreamed vaguely that Xuan entered their bedroom. Unconsciously, she cried out, "This is not a place for the monk to come." Gongfu asked her why, and she told him what she had seen. Gongfu called for a lamp and showed her Xuan's letter. She was indeed pregnant, and when the child was born, he was named "Elder Xuan." At barely one year of age, he remembered things and answered questions just as before.

When he reached the age of three, the monk Baiyun Duan passed by his home. Gongfu called the child out to meet him. At the very sight of him, the child called out, "Dharma nephew!" Duan said, "How many years has it been since we parted, Reverend?" Xuan counted on his fingers and said, "Four years." Duan said, "Where did we part?" Xuan said, "At White Lotus Manor." Duan said, "What proof is there?" Xuan said, "Father and mother will invite you for a vegetarian meal tomorrow, Reverend."

Just then, a cart passed outside the gate. Duan said, "What is that sound outside the gate?" Xuan made the gesture of pushing a cart. Duan said, "What will remain after it has passed?" Xuan said, "A ditch across level ground." When Gongfu's son reached six years of age, he passed away without illness.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

The following lineage chart explains why Chan Master Guizong Kexuan called Chan Master Baiyun Duan his Dharma nephew:

Huanglong Huinan (Huanglong branch)

Linji school: Fenyang Shanzhao Shishuang Chuyuan Yangqi Fanghui (Yangqi branch) Baiyun Shouduan

Langya Huijue Guizong Kexuan

Chan Master Guizong Xuan passed into nirvāṇa because the local official, the prefect of Nankang, relentlessly pressured him. Before his passing, he wrote a letter and secretly sent it to his lay friend Guo Gongfu. The letter said: “I still have six years of worldly affinity remaining. Today, I can no longer endure this coercion. I wish to take rebirth in your household; I hope you will look after me.” He also instructed the messenger not to let the county magistrate see it.

At the time, Guo Gongfu was serving as a judicial officer of Nanchang County, which was under the jurisdiction of the prefect of Nankang. He did not want the Nanchang county magistrate to know of the matter, fearing that he would seek credit by reporting it to the prefect and thereby create further trouble, to Guo Gongfu’s disadvantage.

Chan Master Xuan was not only able to arrange where he would go after death; upon returning, he also did not lose his memory. As soon as the one-year-old child could speak, he remembered and answered questions as before—he remembered all that had concerned the late Chan Master Xuan, and his exchanges with Guo Gongfu still bore Chan Master Xuan’s style. When he was three, the monk Baiyun Duan came to Guo Gongfu’s home, and the child called him “Dharma nephew” as soon as they met.

Chan Master Duan asked, “How many years has it been since we parted, Reverend?” This was to test whether he remembered his former life. He immediately answered, “Four years.” Baiyun Duan continued, “Where did we part?” This was a further test. He replied, “At White Lotus Manor.”

His answers were all correct, leaving no doubt that Chan Master Xuan had returned. Then Chan Master Baiyun Duan suddenly asked, “What proof is there?” This was a test in Chan style: “Are you using rebirth as a means to verify the Buddhadharma for people?” The child said, “Father and mother will invite you for a vegetarian meal tomorrow, Reverend.”

—This was not a verification of the Buddhadharma. It was simply an ordinary matter, as ordinary as your eating tomorrow. At that moment, someone pushed a cart past the gate, making a sound.

Taking this as an occasion, Baiyun Duan asked, “What is that sound outside the gate?”—The implication was: “Your rebirth is not so ordinary; such a thing lies beyond the ordinary perceptions of worldly people. Why have you done this?” The child made the gesture of pushing a cart—“I was pushed here,” that is, compelled by the prefect of Nankang. Duan said, “What will remain after it has passed?”

—And what then? Xuan said, “A ditch across level ground.”—I will die at the age of six. Just as a ditch remains after the cart has passed, people afterward will see only the ditch and not the cart. At most, people will know that the county judicial officer Guo’s child died at six—the trace is like a ditch—and will not thereby connect him with Chan Master Xuan and cause further trouble; the ground will remain level as before.

When the child had just reached the age of six, he died without illness. Alas! If there had been a system of recognizing reincarnate lamas in China at that time, the outcome might not have been like this.

The saw is quite sharp, but only... Banana Peel 12:39:08 8/13/02 (18)

I removed that word “alas.” ^o^ lvm 12:56:08 8/13/02 (no content)

Oh. Banana Peel 12:31:26 8/14/02 (52)

Then add it back in. lvm 13:09:53 8/14/02 (no content)

Does that make any sense? Banana Peel 09:45:48 8/15/02 (no content)

Removing it or adding it back will not do; then what should we do? lvm 09:59:47 8/15/02 (no content)

HA HA. Banana Peel 10:04:33 8/15/02 (no content)

Your criticisms and comments are welcome. lvm 12:46:24 8/13/02 (no content)

Eighty-Nine: Another Rebirth

[Original Koan Text]

Monk Haiyin Xin, a Dharma heir of Langya and a native of Guifu, resided at Dinghui Monastery in Suzhou. He was over eighty years old. Zhu, a Military Defense Commissioner, supported him regularly, and he often visited Zhu’s home. One day

Zhu asked, “Master, in a future life, could you be reborn in your disciple’s family?” The master smiled faintly and assented. After returning to the monastery, he fell ill and passed away several days later. On the very day of his passing, a girl was born into Zhu’s family.

At that time, Chan Master Yuanzhao Ben was residing at Ruiguang. Hearing of this matter, he went to visit. The child had just turned one month old and was brought out in someone’s arms. At the first sight of her, she smiled. Yuanzhao called out, “Haiyin, you have made a mistake!” The girl cried out several times and then passed away.

[Sawing Open the Scale Weight]

This is another example of rebirth according to one’s own wishes. The child recognized an old acquaintance when she was only one month old, clearly demonstrating that she had not forgotten her former life. Yet Chan Master Yuanzhao Ben criticized Haiyin for having made a mistake. This reflects the attitude toward rebirth held in Buddhist circles in China at that time. Chinese Buddhism did not endorse miraculous phenomena. The following example of Chan Master Huangbo offers a glimpse of this:

Chan Master Huangbo was traveling on Mount Tiantai when he encountered a monk. They talked and laughed as though they were old acquaintances. Looking at him closely, Huangbo saw that his gaze was piercing, and so they traveled together. When the water in a ravine suddenly rose in flood, Huangbo cast aside his hat, planted his staff, and stopped. The monk urged the master to cross with him. Huangbo said, “If you wish to cross, cross by yourself.” The monk then lifted his robes and stepped upon the waves as if walking on level ground. Looking back, he called, “Come across! Come across!” Huangbo said, “Bah! You fellow who seeks liberation for yourself alone! Had I known earlier, I would have chopped off your shins!” The monk sighed, saying, “You are truly a vessel of the Mahāyāna Dharma, beyond my reach.” Having said this, he vanished.

Another example: One day, an extraordinary being, wearing a lofty official cap and formal robes, came to the practice place of Chan Master Yuangui of Mount Song. He was attended by a great many followers and walked with light, unhurried steps. He announced himself and requested an audience with the master. Seeing his extraordinarily imposing appearance, the master addressed him: “Welcome, worthy one! Why have you come here?”

The other replied, “Does the master recognize me?”

The master said, “I see Buddhas and sentient beings as equal. When I look upon you, how could I make distinctions?”

The other said, “I am the mountain deity of this peak. I can grant people life and death. How can you regard me as equal?”

The master said, “I am originally unborn; how can you cause me to die? I see the body as equal to empty space, and I see myself as equal to you. Can you destroy empty space and yourself? If you could destroy empty space and yourself, then I would indeed be neither born nor extinguished. Yet you cannot even do this, so how could you cause me to live or die?”

The deity bowed his head to the ground and said, “Among other deities, I too am intelligent and upright. How could I have known that the master possessed such vast wisdom and eloquence? I beg you to confer the true precepts upon me, so that I may cross beyond the world.”

The master said, “Since you seek the precepts, you are already within the precepts. Why is this so? Outside the precepts there are no precepts; what further precepts could there be?”

The deity said, “Although I have heard this principle, I remain confused. I only ask the master to confer the precepts upon me and accept me as a disciple.”

The master then arranged a seat for him, took up the incense burner, straightened the table, and said, “I shall confer upon you the five precepts. If you can uphold them, answer ‘I can’; if you cannot, answer ‘I cannot.’”

The deity said, “I respectfully accept your instruction.”

The master asked, “Can you refrain from sexual misconduct?” The deity replied, “I too take a wife.”

The master said, “That is not what I mean. I mean that you must be free of netlike craving.”

The deity said, “I can.”

The master asked, “Can you refrain from stealing?”

The deity said, “What could I possibly lack? How could I steal or take anything?”

The master said, “That is not what I mean. I mean that you must not bestow blessings on those who make offerings merely out of desire, nor bring calamity upon those who do not make offerings though they are good.”

The deity said, “I can.”

The master asked, “Can you refrain from killing?”

The deity said, “I truly hold authority over it. How can I say that I do not kill?”

The master said, “That is not what I mean. I mean that there must be no indiscriminate, mistaken, doubtful, or confused killing.”

The deity said, “I can.”

The master asked, “Can you refrain from false speech?”

The deity said, “I am upright and straightforward. How could I speak falsely?”

The master said, “That is not what I mean. I mean that your actions before and after must not fail to accord with the will of Heaven.”

The deity said, “I can.”

The master asked, “Can you avoid being ruined by wine?”

The deity said, “I can.”

The master said, “These are the Buddha’s precepts.”

He further said, “Uphold them with a mindful intention, yet without mindlessly clinging to them; act for the sake of beings with intention, yet without conceiving of yourself. If you can do this, then being born before heaven and earth, you are not a spirit; dying after heaven and earth, you are not old. Though you transform throughout the day, you are not moved; though you are utterly silent to the end, you are not at rest. Believe this, and though you take a wife, she is not a wife; though you receive offerings, you do not take them; though you wield authority, it is not power; though you act, it is not deliberate action; though you are intoxicated, you are not deluded.”

“If you can be without mind toward all things, then netlike craving is not sexual misconduct; bestowing blessings out of desire and bringing calamity upon the good is not stealing; indiscriminate, mistaken, doubtful, and confused acts are not killing; acting before and after in violation of Heaven is not false speech; and confused, wild, and inverted states are not intoxication. This is called no-mind. With no-mind there are no precepts; with no precepts there is no-mind. There is no Buddha and no sentient being, no you and no I. Who, then, is there to uphold precepts?”

The deity said, “My spiritual powers are second only to the Buddha’s.”

The master said, “Of your spiritual powers, there are ten statements: five things you can do and five things you cannot do. Of the Buddha’s, there are likewise ten statements: seven things he can do and three things he cannot do.”

Startled, the deity withdrew from his seat, knelt, and asked, “May I hear them?”

The master said, “Can you defy the Lord on High, travel eastward through heaven, and make the seven luminaries move westward?”

The deity replied, “I cannot.”

The master said, “Can you seize the earth deities, melt the Five Peaks, and bind together the four seas?”

The deity replied, “I cannot.”

The master said, “These are called the five things you cannot do. The Buddha can empty all appearances and accomplish the wisdom of all dharmas, yet cannot immediately eliminate fixed karma. The Buddha can know the natures of all beings and exhaust the events of countless eons, yet cannot guide those without affinity. The Buddha can liberate immeasurable sentient beings, yet cannot exhaust the realm of sentient beings. These are the three things he cannot do. Fixed karma is not permanently unshakable; lack of affinity lasts only for a time; and the realm of sentient beings neither increases nor decreases. Throughout it all, not a single person can govern these dharmas. Where there are dharmas but no governor, this is called no-dharma. Where there is no dharma and no governor, this is called no-mind. As I understand it, the Buddha too has no spiritual powers; he merely penetrates all dharmas through no-mind.”

The deity said, “I am truly shallow and ignorant and have never heard the meaning of emptiness. I shall practice the precepts bestowed by the master. Now I wish to repay your compassionate virtue by offering what little powers I possess.”

The master said, “I see that the body has no substance, and I see that all dharmas are impermanent. What desire could I possibly have?”

The deity said, “Master, you must command me to do something in the world, so that I may display my minor spiritual powers and enable the five kinds of people—those who have aroused the resolve, those newly arousing it, those who have not aroused it, those without faith, and those certain to have faith—to witness my divine traces and know that there are Buddhas and deities, things that can and cannot be done, and what is natural and what is not natural.”

The master said, “Non-contrivance is so; non-contrivance is so.”

The deity said, “The Buddha also employs deities to protect the Dharma. Would the master rather destroy and betray the Buddha? I beg you to instruct me as you wish.”

Unable to refuse, the master said, “The barrier at Dongyan Monastery is an overgrown wilderness without trees. The northern ridge has trees, but its rear does not form a protective screen. Can you move the trees from the north to the eastern ridge?”

The deity said, “I have received your command. Yet there will surely be commotion in the dark of night; I hope the master will not be alarmed.” He then made obeisance, took leave, and departed.

The master saw him off and watched him go. He saw a long procession of ceremonial guards, like those of a king; mists, clouds, and rosy vapors intermingled in confusion; banners, streamers, pendants, and ornaments vanished into the sky.

That evening, fierce winds indeed howled, thunder roared, clouds raced, lightning flashed, buildings shook, and roosting birds cried out noisily. The master said to the assembly, “Do not be afraid! Do not be afraid! The deity and I have reached an understanding.”

At dawn the next day, when the weather had cleared, all the pines and cypresses from the northern ridge had been moved to the eastern ridge, standing in dense rows. The master said to his disciples, “After I die, do not let outsiders know of this. If it becomes talk for others, people will regard me as a demon.”

Although this was such a miraculous event, Chan Master Yuangui of Mount Song instructed his disciples to keep it secret. Otherwise, people would regard the Chan master as some kind of demon. From this we may glimpse how people in China at that time regarded miraculous phenomena.

In fact, China too had eminent monastics who attained the rainbow body. But because miraculous phenomena were not valued, such matters were not extolled, and most passed into obscurity. Even when they were recorded, it was usually incidentally in connection with some other matter. For example, Patriarch Bodhidharma was not only able to transform completely away within his coffin, but also to reappear in bodily form, carrying a single sandal and conversing with Song Yun.

Another example: When Monk Puhua of Zhenzhou was about to manifest cessation, he entered the marketplace and said to people, “Give me a straight-sleeved monastic robe.” Some offered him a cloth-padded jacket, while others offered a cloth fur robe, but he accepted neither, shook his handbell, and left. Linji had someone deliver him a coffin. The master laughed and said, “That fellow Linji is too talkative!” Then he accepted it. He bade farewell to the assembly, saying that he would die at the East Gate the following day.

The people of the district accompanied him out of the city. The master cried out sharply, “Today is not an auspicious day for burial according to geomancy.” Then he said, “Tomorrow I shall pass away at the South Gate.” People again followed him. He then said, “The day after tomorrow, going out by the West Gate will be auspicious.” Fewer and fewer people came out. When he went out and returned again, people became somewhat lax. On the fourth day, he himself carried the coffin out through the North Gate, shook his handbell, entered the coffin, and died. The townspeople rushed out of the city, opened the coffin, and saw that he had already disappeared. They heard only the sound of his handbell gradually fading away in the sky.

Some mantras can break fixed karma. Qinglong 15:38:16 8/14/02 (4K)

Oh my! Such mastery of spiritual powers is truly what my heart yearns for! Junior Dharma Brother 19:50:50 8/13/02 (no content)

90. The Dharma Eye Is Not Clear

[Original Text of the Koan]

Elder Fu of Changlu lacked the Dharma eye. He often used the offerings and benefits he received to provide vegetarian meals for monastics in the Upper River region. When Chan Master Faxiu of Yuantong heard of this, he went to test whether it was true. Upon arriving, he saw Elder Fu ascend the Dharma seat and say: “Entering a wilderness field without discrimination—how utterly muddled! Casually picking up a blade of grass is still somewhat better.” He then stepped down. Master Xiu was greatly astonished and said, “To speak of Chan in this way—who could say that he does not understand it?” He therefore assumed that people everywhere were maliciously disparaging Fu.

He then personally went to the abbot’s quarters to pay his respects, fully recounted why he had come, and asked for further instruction on the words that had just been spoken from the Dharma seat. Fu explained them according to the words and their meanings. Xiu said, “If that is so, then people everywhere are not falsely saying that you do not understand Chan.” Fu would not accept this. Xiu said, “Please strike the bell and gather the assembly. Senior Monk Faxiu is here and will settle the matter with the Reverend.” Fu withdrew.

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

Elder Fu of Changlu possessed considerable blessings and received abundant offerings. He often used the benefits he received to provide vegetarian meals for monastics in the Upper River region, thereby planting further blessings for future lives. Yet people said that he cultivated merit but not wisdom, and that he lacked the

Dharma eye. When Chan Master Faxiu of Yuantong heard these remarks, he went in person to pay a visit and see for himself whether they were true.

Soon after arriving at Changlu, he happened to encounter Elder Fu ascending the Dharma seat to teach. Elder Fu said: “Entering a wilderness field without discrimination—how utterly muddled! Casually picking up a blade of grass is still somewhat better.” Having said this, he stepped down.

“Entering a wilderness field without discrimination—how utterly muddled!”—No matter how much Buddhadharma you have learned, if you merely understand it as doctrine and cannot put it into practice, then you only have a muddled Buddha-nature and a vague suchness; you gain no genuine benefit from it.

“Casually picking up a blade of grass is still somewhat better.”—Even if one can put into practice only a single word or phrase of the Buddhadharma, that still counts as gaining genuine benefit from it.

When Chan Master Xiu of Yuantong heard this, he was greatly astonished. If someone could speak of Chan to such a degree, how could one say that he lacked the Dharma eye? He therefore thought that people were needlessly stirring up trouble and deliberately disparaging Fu. So he respectfully went to the abbot’s quarters to pay his respects, explained the circumstances that had brought him there, and asked Elder Fu to give further instruction on the words he had just spoken from the Dharma seat.

Elder Fu explained the words he had just spoken according to their literal meaning. As soon as Xiu of Yuantong heard this, he knew that the words had been learned from others and had not flowed from Fu’s own heart. Greatly disappointed, he said bluntly, “If that is so, then people everywhere are not falsely saying that you do not understand Chan.” What exactly had Elder Fu said in his explanation that made Xiu of Yuantong reject it? In fact, nothing else need be said: if he explained it as in the passages following the dashes above, that alone would have shown his understanding to be utterly earthbound.

“Entering a wilderness field without discrimination—how utterly muddled! Casually picking up a blade of grass is still somewhat better.” Once these words have been spoken, that is the end of it. If Xiu of Yuantong pressed further into their meaning, one could not explain their underlying principle. One must look to the thrust of Xiu of Yuantong’s question and, according to the occasion, dispel it. To explain it theoretically in that way is to establish a single dharma, which greatly violates the Chan school’s principle of not establishing a single dharma. This is why Xiu of Yuantong did not accept Fu.

Elder Fu was still unconvinced by Xiu of Yuantong's rejection. Master Xiu said, "Please strike the bell and gather the assembly. Senior Monk Faxiu is here and will settle the matter with the Reverend." He wanted to determine the matter openly with Elder Fu before the entire assembly. But Elder Fu shrank back and ultimately did not dare strike the bell and gather the assembly. This clearly shows that he truly lacked the Dharma eye.

Ninety-One: Dharma Protectors Will Not Tolerate It

[Original Koan]

Chan Master Jue of Kaisheng in Hezhou initially studied under Changlu Yingfu, known as "Iron Legs." After a long time, he had gained nothing. Hearing of the Dharma teaching of Wuzu Fayan of Dongshan, he went straight to study under him.

One day, during an interview in the abbot's room, the master posed this question: "Śākyamuni and Maitreya are still his servants. Tell me, who is he?" Jue replied, "Hu Zhangsan, Black Li Si." The patriarch approved his reply. At that time, Chan Master Yuanwu was head seat. The patriarch told him of this reply. Yuanwu said, "It is a good answer, but I fear it is not yet genuine. Do not let him pass; have him investigate further beneath these words."

The next day, when Jue entered the room, the master posed the same question. Jue said, "I told you yesterday, Master." The patriarch said, "What did you say?" Jue replied, "Hu Zhangsan, Black Li Si." The patriarch said, "No, no." Jue said, "Why did you say it was right yesterday, Master?" The patriarch replied, "Yesterday it was right; today it is not." At these words, Jue had a great awakening.

Afterward, Jue began teaching and resided at Kaisheng. Seeing that Changlu's Dharma assembly was flourishing, he became Yingfu's successor, without acknowledging what he had received. While offering incense, he suddenly felt as if his chest were being pounded. An abscess developed at the painful spot and formed an opening, which he plugged with a cake of frankincense. It did not heal after a long time, and he eventually died.

[The Elder's Marginal Comment]

Could a bodhisattva who had realized the Way so utterly obscure his natural conscience, be moved by profit, and forget his teacher's kindness?!

Was it that his accumulated habits from many lives were deeply entrenched, or that his realization of the Way was incomplete?

Even the Dharma protectors do not tolerate one who obscures his natural conscience. Jue felt as if his chest were being pounded; an abscess developed, and he died.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Jue of Kaisheng had originally studied Chan under Chan Master Changlu Yingfu of the Yunmen school. Although he studied for a long time, he was unable to gain realization. Later, hearing of the teaching style of Chan Master Wuzu Fayan of the Yangqi branch of the Linji school, he went to study under Wuzu.

One day, he entered the room to consult Wuzu. Wuzu asked him, "Śākyamuni and Maitreya are still his servants. Tell me, who is he?" This of course refers to Buddha-nature! What World-Honored One Śākyamuni realized beneath the bodhi tree after six years of seeking was precisely this. It is the "wisdom, virtues, and marks of the Tathāgata": essence and function are one, beyond language and beyond thought.

If he had answered "Buddha-nature," he would clearly have clung to essence while being deluded about function; the answer would already have been distorted. Chan Master Jue therefore did not give the distorted answer "Buddha-nature," but answered directly: "Hu Zhangsan, Black Li Si." Wuzu approved his reply. At that time, Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu was the head seat. Wuzu told Foguo of Chan Master Jue's reply, and Foguo said, "The answer is good, but it may not be his genuine realization; he may have learned it from someone else. Do not let him pass. Have him give another response, and examine him further."

The next day, Chan Master Jue again entered the room to consult Wuzu. Wuzu again asked him, "Śākyamuni and Maitreya are still his servants. Tell me, who is he?" Chan Master Jue said, "I already answered this question yesterday." He was clinging to yesterday's answer.

Yet "yesterday's" answer might also contain another meaning. He could first answer in this way and then turn the words further; then he would not be clinging to "Hu Zhangsan, Black Li Si." Since Wuzu wished to test him, he naturally had to get to the root of the matter, so he pressed on: "What did you say yesterday?" Chan Master Jue replied, "Hu Zhangsan, Black Li Si."

Ha ha! As expected, he was clinging to it; now the fox's tail was exposed. Therefore Wuzu said, "No, no." Chan Master Jue still did not understand, and instead asked, "Then why did you say it was right yesterday?" Wuzu immediately pointed it out to him: "Yesterday it was right; today it is not." Yesterday he was not clinging to "Buddha-nature," so it was right; today he was clinging to yesterday's words, so it was not. Clinging means attachment. It is not a question of whether something is

right or wrong, but only of whether one is attached or not. Through Wuzu's instruction, Chan Master Jue had a great awakening on the spot.

In ancient times, practitioners traveled about studying under and consulting many Chan worthies. If they had cast off their hindrances, they would succeed their teacher in emerging to teach the Dharma, thereby repaying their teacher's kindness. If they had not yet thoroughly penetrated, they would continue their travels and studies in search of complete realization. Of course, some whose realization of the Way was incomplete also emerged to teach the Dharma, but they could not deceive those with discerning eyes.

After Chan Master Jue emerged to teach, he became abbot of the Kaisheng practice center. Seeing that Changlu Yingfu's Dharma assembly was flourishing and highly renowned, and that succeeding Changlu would surely benefit him, he actually obscured his teacher's kindness and did not become Wuzu's successor. Instead, he currried favor with the powerful and became Changlu's successor.

The Elder asks: "Was it that his accumulated habits from many lives were deeply entrenched, or that his realization of the Way was incomplete?" Even if his habitual tendencies were deeply entrenched, if he had truly realized the Way, he should have promptly recognized such an obscuring of his natural conscience. His realization of the Way was incomplete; he was not a bodhisattva who had realized the Way. Thus the Elder said: "Could a bodhisattva who had realized the Way so utterly obscure his natural conscience, be moved by profit, and forget his teacher's kindness?!"

While Chan Master Jue was offering incense at the opening of his Dharma hall to teach the Dharma, he suddenly felt as if his chest were being pounded. An abscess then developed at the painful spot and formed an opening, which he plugged with a cake of frankincense. Treatment continued for a long time without success, and he died in this way. The Elder commented: "Even the Dharma protectors do not tolerate one who obscures his natural conscience. Jue felt as if his chest were being pounded; an abscess developed, and he died."

The Dharma protectors' intolerance is the condition; insufficient wholesome roots are the cause; what he realized was only a false awakening, resulting from his inability to see through the pain. Yuanzhi 11:58:02 8/17/02 (no content)

Turning Guest into Host: A Critique of "091. The Dharma Protectors Do Not Tolerate It" Vajra Measure 12:06:36 9/11/02 (64)

Is your lofty opinion a provisional explanation, or an ultimate explanation? lvm 13:24:57 9/11/02 (no content)

A fitting post. Vajra Measure 17:07:15 9/11/02 (no content)

So it turns out that you, too, are unwilling to wear the tall hat of an “ultimate explanation.” lvm 17:11:59 9/11/02 (44)

Ha ha, in your view, have I misunderstood the giving of generosity among the six perfections? Vajra Measure 17:58:06 9/11/02 (147)

Do you find this sort of wrangling interesting? lvm 18:46:49 9/11/02 (no content)

If you do not wrangle, how would you know what carries weight? What stature for a chief moderator! Vajra Measure 16:22:08 9/12/02 (no content)

92. Wrong from the Start!

[Original Koan]

One day, Wang Jinggong visited Chan Master Yuan of Jiangshan. As they sat discussing matters, they commented on figures and events of past and present. Yuan said, “Your Excellency, your manner of speaking is overbearing. I fear that the toil of searching and pondering for your writings has unsettled your mind. Why not sit in meditation and personally realize this great matter?” Wang followed his advice.

One day, Wang said to Yuan, “Meditation truly does not disappoint one. For several years I had wanted to compose Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute, but could not complete it. While sitting in meditation at night, I finished it.” Yuan laughed heartily.

[The Elder’s Marginal Comment]

He was already wrong from the start!

[Sawing Apart the Weight]

Everyone has studied history and remembers Wang Anshi’s political reforms, does not one? The Wang Jinggong in this koan is Wang Anshi. He got along very well with Chan Master Yuan of Jiangshan, so he often sat with the master discussing matters and commenting on figures and events of past and present. Chan Master Yuan noticed that Wang’s mind lacked equanimity and that his manner of speaking was overbearing. Fearing that excessive deliberation in his writing had unsettled his mind, he urged him to sit in meditation. Thus Wang Anshi began to learn meditation.

Meditation is a method, but what is its purpose? It is to “personally realize this great matter”—birth and death are the great matter, and impermanence is swift. One must no longer be immersed in excessive and unprofitable deliberation.

One day, Wang Anshi went to see Yuan of Jiangshan and said to the Chan master, “Meditation truly does not disappoint one. For several years I had wanted to

compose Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute, but could not complete it. While sitting in meditation at night, I finished it." It turned out that this was what he had used his meditation for! When Chan Master Yuan heard this, he laughed heartily. What was he laughing at? He was laughing because Wang had traded a maṇi jewel for a piece of candy.

The Elder commented: "He was already wrong from the start!" From when was he already wrong? From the very beginning, when he started learning meditation, his initial resolve was already improper. Where did he go wrong? Instead of "at the first arousing of the resolve, immediately attaining right awakening," he treated meditation as a tool for literary inspiration. He was wrong in his initial resolve; thus it is said that he "was already wrong from the start."

How could Wang Anshi be the only one? Let us turn back and look at ourselves: Have we, too, made the supramundane Buddhadharma into a tool for worldly purposes? Perhaps it is not used for literary inspiration, but for contending for fame or grasping for profit. There is another use that is not easily noticed, yet is even more fatal: using it for "meditative experiences"!

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Agreed! When the cause is improper, the result is tortuous. Kangkang, 10:58:33, 8/16/02 (no content)

The decisive role of the initial resolve should receive our utmost attention! Shangchi, 10:03:52, 8/16/02 (no content)

Ninety-Three: On the Views of the Attained One

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day, Wang Jinggong asked Duke Wending Zhang, "A hundred years after Confucius passed away, Mencius, the Lesser Sage, was born. After that, no one else appeared. Why was this?" Duke Wending replied, "How could there have been no one? There were even those who surpassed Confucius and Mencius." Wang asked, "Who?" Duke Wending said, "Chan Master Mazu of Jiangxi, Chan Master Tanran, Chan Master Wuye of Fenyang, Xuefeng, Yantou, Danxia, and Yunmen." When Wang Jinggong heard this list, he did not fully understand, and so asked, "What do you mean?" Duke Wending said, "The Confucian school is too weak to contain them; they all went to the Buddhists." Wang joyfully sighed in admiration.

Later, this was related to Zhang Wujin. As Layman Wujin stroked his table, he sighed in appreciation: "These are the words of one with penetrating insight."

[Sawing a Steelyard Weight Apart]

Wang Jinggong lamented to Duke Wending: “Confucius was a great sage. Only a hundred years after the sage’s death did the Lesser Sage—Mencius—appear. After that, no more people of ability emerged. Why was this?” Duke Wending said, “Who says no people of ability emerged? There were even those who surpassed Confucius and Mencius.”

Wang Jinggong asked, “Whom do you mean?” Duke Wending said, “Great Master Mazu, Chan Master Tanran, Chan Master Shanzhao of Fenyang, Xuefeng, Yantou, Danxia, and Yunmen—these were all such people.” Yet none of them belonged to the Confucian tradition. This left Wang Jinggong perplexed, so he asked, “What do you mean?” Duke Wending explained, “The Confucian school is too weak to contain them; they all went to the Buddhists.” “Oh, so that is how it is!” Wang Jinggong joyfully understood and was greatly impressed.

Later, someone told Zhang Wujin about the conversation between the two gentlemen. As Layman Wujin stroked his table, he praised it, saying, “These are the words of one with penetrating insight.”

Those who study Confucianism often seek sages only within the Confucian tradition and lament the scarcity of people of ability. Do they not see that talented people are numerous and emerge without end? “The Confucian school is too weak to contain them; they all went to the Buddhists.”

Beside a sunken boat, a thousand sails pass; before a diseased tree, ten thousand trees burst into spring.

What does "The Confucian school is too weak to contain them" mean? Visitor 08:51:00 8/21/02 (no content)

This is an ancient matter. lvm 19:03:44 8/22/02 (88)

Many thanks, Teacher lvm. Visitor 17:13:56 8/23/02 (no content)

? Visitor 16:35:44 8/22/02 (no content)

Ninety-Four: Writing One’s Own Pardon

[Original Text of the Koan]

Commissioner Ren was a worthy man among the palace eunuchs and was greatly favored by Emperor Huizong. He devoted himself wholeheartedly to Buddhism and visited spiritual teachers everywhere. He often lamented to himself: “I am fortunate to have obtained a human birth, yet my body is incomplete, and I do not even know

who my birth parents were. I must have despised and slighted others in a previous life and thereby incurred this retribution." He therefore vowed that whenever he had a day off and returned to his private residence, he would withdraw from all worldly affairs, light incense and bow before the Buddha, and write out one copy of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra in his own blood. For every character, he made three prostrations, praying that in a future life he would know his birth parents.

One day, a visitor called, but Ren came out late. The visitor angrily said, "A guest has come to your door; why have you not come out?" Ren smiled and replied, "I was at home writing a pardon document." When the visitor asked why, Ren told him the truth. He then took out the sūtra and showed it to him, saying, "This is a pardon document before King Yama, exempting one from iron cudgels and iron pellets." The visitor was terrified and astonished; when he returned home, he too wrote out a copy.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Commissioner Ren was an orphan. He later became a eunuch, yet he was highly worthy and capable, and enjoyed the deep trust of the imperial household. He was a devout Buddhist and visited many great spiritual teachers. He lamented to himself: "I am fortunate to have obtained a human body in this life, yet my body is incomplete, and I do not even know who my parents are. This must be because I despised and slighted others in a previous life, thereby incurring this evil retribution." He therefore vowed to light incense, write in blood, and make three prostrations for every character, reverently using his own blood to write out one copy of the Avataṃsaka Sūtra. He dedicated the merit with the wish that in a future life he would no longer be an orphan.

One day, a visitor called. Ren was occupied with copying the sūtra and was delayed in coming out to greet him. The visitor became angry: "A guest has come to your door; why have you not come out?" Commissioner Ren replied with an ingratiating smile that he was busy writing a pardon document.

The visitor was utterly perplexed—granting pardons was the emperor's business; what pardon document could a eunuch write? He asked why, and Commissioner Ren told him the truth. Taking out the sūtra and showing it to the visitor, he said: "This is a pardon document before King Yama, exempting one from iron cudgels and iron pellets!" The visitor was terrified and astonished. After returning home, he vowed to write out a copy himself as well.

Both Commissioner Ren and the visitor deeply believed in cause and effect, and so were willing to arouse the resolve to write out sūtras in their own blood. A complete Avataṃsaka Sūtra, with three prostrations for every character—how long would that take to complete? Yet where there is resolve, things will ultimately be accomplished.

Both deeply believed in cause and effect, but they did not merely speak of “faith.” Neither stressed his own “faith”; rather, they put their faith into actual practice. If one only emphasizes something verbally, that is precisely what one lacks in reality. Consider those who chatter incessantly, engage only in lofty talk, and repeatedly stress some point: is that not precisely what they themselves lack?

Everyone, if we too deeply believed in the path of liberation in this way, how many obstacles could we avoid on the path of practice, how much effort could we save, and how many detours could we avoid!

Those who repeatedly emphasize something lack precisely that; those who deliberately avoid something, I fear. Visitor 08:53:52 8/21/02 (14)

Would it not suffice simply to get rid of the excess? lvm 10:43:20 8/21/02 (no content)

Ninety-Five: Petty People Are Jealous

[Original Koan]

Chan Master Fayan of Wuzu, having gone to Chan Master Shouduan of Baiyun Haihui in Shuzhou to seek resolution of the great matter, penetrated it deeply to the marrow of his bones. Master Duan appointed him manager of the mill at the foot of the mountain. Each year, Fayan used the money from selling the bran and husks produced at the mill to pay interest on loans, hire workers, and provide meals; he turned the remaining money over to the resident community.

People repeatedly went before Master Duan to stir up slander and disputes, saying, “Every day at the mill, Fayan drinks wine and eats meat, and even keeps women from the estate.” The entire monastery was thrown into an uproar. When Fayan heard this, he deliberately bought meat and wine and hung them in the mill compound. He also bought cosmetic powder for the women workers to apply. Whenever Chan practitioners came to visit the mill compound, Fayan would tease and laugh with the women in their presence, showing no restraint whatsoever.

One day, Master Duan summoned him to the abbot’s quarters and asked why he was doing this. Fayan merely answered submissively and said nothing else. Master Duan struck him across the face with his palm. Fayan’s expression did not change; he bowed and left. Master Duan shouted, “Stop at once!” Fayan said, “When I have settled the accounts and found someone to take over, I shall leave.” One day he reported to Master Duan: “During my time at the mill, apart from the expenses for buying wine and meat, there remain three hundred strings of cash, which I am

turning over to the resident community." Master Duan was greatly astonished and only then realized that petty people had acted out of jealousy.

At that time, Xiuyuantong, who held the position of First Seat, had accepted invitations from various places. Master Duan therefore invited the Patriarch to become First Seat.

[Sawing Apart the Scale Weight]

After Wuzu Fayan attained thorough awakening under Chan Master Shouduan of Baiyun, Master Duan put him in charge of the water mill at the foot of the mountain. The mill was some distance from the monastery, so it not only allowed him to act independently, but also produced bran and husks that could be sold for money. It offered both freedom and a modest income—a very desirable post indeed.

Expenses such as hiring workers and feeding guests should properly have been borne by the resident community, but Wuzu used the money from selling the bran and husks to cover them. All the mill's income was turned over to the resident community. Yet in the eyes of others, it was still a desirable post with both authority and profit.

Any desirable post will attract the jealousy of petty people. Though you are not embezzling anything, you occupy the position and prevent others from embezzling, so people repeatedly spoke ill of Wuzu before Baiyun Duan. In time, they even fabricated tales such as, "Every day at the mill he drinks wine and eats meat, and keeps women from the estate." Rumors spread everywhere, and the whole monastery was in turmoil.

But Baiyun Duan was not swayed by these reports; he trusted Wuzu. Nor was Wuzu unaware of the rumors, yet he too was unmoved. If he resigned, he would dishonor his master's command; if he defended himself, it would only make him seem more suspicious.

Ha! Not only was Wuzu unmoved—he even decided to test his master. That he could still take such elegant amusement at a time like this shows that he truly was unmoved. If his master, on hearing that he drank wine and ate meat, could see through the lie, then Wuzu would deliberately buy a piece of meat and hang it up as evidence. If his master, on hearing that he kept women from the estate, regarded it as sheer fabrication, then Wuzu would deliberately buy cosmetics for the women workers. He would even joke and flirt with them before others, deliberately putting on an utterly unrestrained manner.

Continuing in this way, one day Baiyun Duan summoned Wuzu to the abbot's quarters and asked why he was acting so. Wuzu deliberately stood there

submissively and speechless—testing his master face to face. Baiyun Duan immediately struck him across the face with his palm. Wuzu Fayan's expression did not change; he bowed and was about to take leave of his master and depart: If you cannot distinguish right from wrong, then I shall leave you.

Baiyun Duan shouted for him to stop: "You cannot simply leave like that. Settle the mill's affairs before you go!" Wuzu replied, "Very well. Once I have straightened out the accounts, I shall hand them over." A few days later, the accounts had been settled. Needless to say, they included no fewer than these two entries: one purchase of meat and one purchase of cosmetics.

Wuzu handed the account book to Baiyun Duan and reported: "During the time I managed the mill, after the expenses for buying wine and meat, there remain three hundred strings of cash. Let them be turned over to the resident community." How could so much money remain? Baiyun Duan was utterly astonished. Only then did he understand that this affair involved not merely the jealousy of petty people; he also understood Wuzu's broad-mindedness, unobstructed in every circumstance.

Just then, Xiuyuantong, the First Seat, had accepted an invitation elsewhere, leaving the position vacant. Baiyun Duan immediately asked Wuzu to become First Seat.

In fact, Chan Master Baiyun Duan was not only unswayed by petty people; he was not deceived by Wuzu either. You wished to test me, did you? Then I shall make you produce an account book, and afterward we shall settle the matter. The position of First Seat must be yours. Even if you wish to run away, you will not be able to escape it.

Ninety-Six: At Ease in Mind and Hand

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Zhantang Zhun, upon reading Kongming's Memorial on Sending Out the Troops, realized how to write prose.

In his "Preface for an Offering to the Arhats," he wrote: "The Sanskrit arhat is rendered here as 'unborn.' Having left behind the toilsome afflictions of the twenty-five modes of existence in the three realms, they transcend segmented birth and death. Entrusted by the Tathāgata, they are worthy of offerings from devas and humans. They bring benefit and blessing to all sentient beings; donors should properly make offerings."

He also wrote in "Account of the Water Mill:"

“Mount Letan was formerly the great place of practice where Chan Master Mazu Daji, together with the Chan practitioners of his day, selected Buddhas. Although the age is far removed from us, the Buddhadharma has never been far away. Yet, because the spiritual teachers in between have differed in their understanding, with some higher and some lower, it has indeed become distant. For example, when a monk asked Mazu, ‘What is Buddha?’ he replied, ‘Mind itself is Buddha.’ Thus, from what he meant, we know that sentient beings are originally Buddhas, with no distinction of high or low. The distinction of high and low lies in people, not in the Dharma. How much more so in this latter age, when there are those who claim to teach the Dharma. Therefore, in selecting Buddhas and seeking teachers, one cannot fail to be discerning.”

“In the wuxu year of the Yuanfu era of the Great Song dynasty, Senior Monk Yizhong of Hanzhong sought teachers and visited the Way, selected Buddhas and practiced Chan. Carrying dry wood with him, he made a performance wherever there was an occasion—yet was it merely a performance? Through his achievement at that time, he benefited countless ages. Thereupon, he reformed the old system. The people of Ying still remained deluded, following their implements; adapting skillfully to the occasion lay with me.”

“How could one use compass and square to constrain his great undertaking, or be limited by the rules and measures of the ancients? This is what is meant by ‘a son cannot be taught’: what can be taught is merely the dregs of language, not the utmost wonder of mind. The mind in its utmost wonder is within oneself, not in written words or language. Even secret instruction from an enlightened teacher cannot equal one’s own realization in mind.”

“Therefore it is said, ‘When it is attained in the mind, it responds in the hand’: all this is the wondrous functioning of the numinous mind-Dharma. Thus, to crack wheat, it becomes a millstone; to husk rice, it becomes a roller mill; to obtain flour, it becomes a sieve; to remove chaff, it becomes a winnowing fan. Yet its design and methods all have their key mechanisms. Once the workings are connected, everything turns by itself without being set in motion.”

“Consider its water: as soon as one wave moves, the waves before and behind respond wave after wave without end. Consider its millstone: as soon as one wheel is raised, the large and small wheels all revolve without exhaustion. Thus, above and below respond to one another, while high and low work together. Its wondrous functioning arises naturally. It does not depend on anything human effort can accomplish, and its marvels are incomparable—mysterious beyond mystery.”

“Then, turning left and right, moving vertically and horizontally, striking and touching one another, they produce the great sound of the Dharma, all expounding suffering,

emptiness, impermanence, non-self, and the various pāramitās. Those who hear, hear their own minds; those who see, see their own natures. Through smell, taste, knowing, and awareness, all receive the joy of Dharma delight and Chan bliss. Moreover, rice, flour, and all other necessities are supplied to the Fragrant Accumulation Kitchen to make the two daily meals, satisfying the Chan practitioners and those who come and go to select Buddhas."

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Zhantang Zhun had never studied how to write prose, but upon reading Kongming's Memorial on Sending Out the Troops, he suddenly realized how to write. Master Hanshan of the Ming dynasty was the same: literary inspiration suddenly welled up in him, and poetry flowed forth unceasingly. These were manifestations in this life of intelligence and wisdom from previous lives.

This koan excerpts two of Zhantang's writings: "Preface for an Offering to the Arhats" and "Account of the Water Mill."

"Account of the Water Mill" records how the monk Yizhong of Hanzhong invented the water mill. This was Buddhism's "knowledge of crafts and technology." The invention of the water mill saved people an immense amount of labor; it fully deserves to be included in Exploitation of the Works of Nature.

Here is another example of Buddhism's "knowledge of crafts and technology:"

Monk Yixing, whose secular name was Zhang Sui, was born in the second year of Yongchun under Emperor Gaozong of the Tang dynasty (683 CE), in Lüle, Weizhou—present-day Nanle County, Henan Province. He was a renowned eminent monk of the Tang dynasty, a grandson of Zhang Gongjin, a founding minister of the Tang, and also an outstanding astronomer.

Besides promoting Liu Zhuo's (544–610 CE) method of interpolation, Monk Yixing established a quadratic interpolation formula for unequal intervals, the renowned "Zhang Sui interpolation formula" in the history of mathematics. He also led the world's first scientific field measurement of the Earth's meridian.

From childhood, Yixing had read widely. He was especially interested in calendrical astronomy and the yin-yang and five phases, and had already attained considerable mastery of them. At that time, Xuandu Temple in the capital, Chang'an, possessed a rich collection of books. Its presiding Daoist master, Yin Chong, was well versed in abstruse learning and was a great scholar renowned far and wide.

Yixing went to seek instruction from Yin Chong and borrowed Yang Xiong's Han-dynasty classic of abstruse learning, the Classic of the Great Mystery. After only a few days, he returned the book.

Yin Chong was displeased and said sternly to him: “This book contains profound principles. Although I have read it several times over the course of several years, I still have not fully penetrated and understood it. You should take it back and read it carefully again.” Yixing replied very solemnly: “I have indeed already finished reading this book.”

Then he produced his written reflections on the book—The Great Evolution Diagram of the Mystery, Explanations of Its Meaning, and other works—and presented them to Yin Chong. After reading them, Yin Chong praised him without end. Thereafter, he often introduced Yixing to others, commending him as a learned and knowledgeable “prodigy” and calling him a consultant among the younger generation. From then on, Yixing’s reputation for broad learning and quick intelligence spread far and wide.

During the Tang dynasty, the Linde Calendar had been used since the reign of Emperor Gaozong; by Yixing’s time, it had been in use for more than fifty years. In the ninth year of Kaiyuan (721 CE), calculations based on the Linde Calendar predicted a solar eclipse on a si day in the ninth month, but the observed result differed greatly. Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang therefore ordered the calendar to be revised and entrusted the task to Yixing.

On the basis of direct observations of the sun, moon, and five planets, Yixing compiled a new calendar. He said: “If we now wish to create and establish a calendar, we must know the advance and retreat of the ecliptic; I request that the Astronomical Bureau conduct further observations.” To obtain precise data from field measurements, Yixing collaborated with the mechanical-engineering expert Liang Lingzan to create such large astronomical instruments as the ecliptic armillary and the water-driven celestial globe.

Yixing also sent Nangong Yue, director of the Astronomical Bureau, to select four locations north and south of the Yellow River for field measurements. These four locations were in what are now Henan Province: Hua County, Kaifeng, Fugou, and Shangcai. Through direct measurement, they overturned the long-accepted erroneous claim that the difference in the sun’s shadow was one inch for every thousand li.

Using Nangong Yue’s measurements and carrying out precise calculations, Yixing reached the conclusions that “over 526 li and 270 bu, the difference is one and a half degrees; over 351 li and 80 bu, the difference is one degree.” Expressed in modern terms, Yixing’s result was 132.03 kilometers per degree. This was in fact the world’s first activity to measure the length of a meridian by direct observation. The noted British scientist Joseph Needham repeatedly praised it as “an epoch-making innovation in the history of science.”

What a splendid saying: “A son cannot be taught”! qwe 13:07:12 8/26/02(164)

97. A Distinctive Way of Teaching People

[Original Text of the Koan]

The master said: “These days, among you fellow practitioners, those who study under Foguo refuse to acknowledge Foyan, while those who follow Foyan refuse to study under Foguo. It is like a group of blind people feeling an elephant: how could they know the intent of these two elders? They utterly fail to realize that Foyan is Foguo with rules, while Foguo is Foyan without rules. If you wish to guide others without blinding their eyes, you must go and see Foguo. If you see only Foyan’s Nirvana Hall Chan, you may save yourself, but you cannot guide others. The fellow practitioners who attained realization under Old Nan were sent to see Zhen ‘Chest-Pointing,’ for his methods were stern and incisive, and his way of guiding others differed from that of Master Nan.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said that present-day students of Chan are heavily burdened by discriminating thought. Those who study with Foguo refuse to acknowledge Foyan, while those who study with Foyan refuse to acknowledge Foguo. This is like blind people feeling an elephant: taking one’s own partial view to cover the whole, they fundamentally fail to understand the intent of these two elders.

Dahui naturally understood the intent of these two elders, and therefore commented: “Foyan is Foguo with rules, while Foguo is Foyan without rules. If you wish to guide others without blinding their eyes, you must go and see Foguo. If you see only Foyan’s Nirvana Hall Chan, you may save yourself, but you cannot guide others.”

Why is it that one who sees only Foyan and not Foguo can save oneself but cannot guide others? Because there are rules—Nirvana Hall Chan. Why can one guide others upon seeing Foguo? Simply because there are no fixed rules: sentient beings differ in their capacities, and if one is to guide others (liberate sentient beings), one must teach according to their capacities and adapt one’s instruction to conditions. The Prajñā Sūtra says: “To expound the profound Dharma to sentient beings who are not vessels for it is a bodhisattva’s error.” Clearly, even a profound Dharma cannot be established as a fixed rule for teaching.

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao gave another example: when someone attained realization under Chan Master Huanglong Huinan, he would have that person go to see Zhen ‘Chest-Pointing’ (Cuiyan Kezhen). This was because Cuiyan Zhen’s methods

were stern and incisive, and his way of guiding others differed from that of Master Nan.

Though all are studying under teachers, their purposes differ:

First, one must open one's own true eye. Whichever master's tongs and hammer enable one to open that true eye is one's root master.

Second, one must learn the methods for guiding others—that is, one must appreciate different Chan styles. For example, Fushan Fayuan of the Linji school studied under Chan Master Dayang Jingxuan of the Caodong school in order to gain a thorough understanding of the Caodong school's tradition.

Ninety-Eight: Moored on Level Ground

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day, the master said: "People who investigate Chan nowadays are like flies: wherever there is even a trace of a fishy or meaty smell, they settle there. You must remove it all for them from the very beginning, until they reach the place where there is no smell, where they may settle on level ground. Among the accomplished lineage masters of old who knew how to guide others, only Muzhou, whenever he saw that you had a place to sit, would immediately shovel it away. From the start, he simply kept shoveling it away."

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

One day, Chan Master Dahui said: "People who investigate Chan nowadays, as soon as they gain the slightest bit of insight, abide in it and cling to it stubbornly. They are like flies: wherever there is the slightest fishy or meaty smell, they stick to it."

One must "drive away the plowman's ox and seize the hungry person's food," utterly taking away even that insight. This brings them to the place without any smell, where they settle on level ground—the scenery of the original ground then appears clearly before them!

The Chan patriarchs had many methods for guiding others. Take Chan Master Muzhou, for example: whenever he saw that you had a place of attachment, he immediately shoveled it away. If another attachment arose, he shoveled that away too, continuing until everything had been completely cleared away. Then look—what is it?

Let us look at how Chan Master Muzhou shoveled away Yunmen:

As soon as Muzhou saw Yunmen coming, he shut the door.

Yunmen knocked on the door. Muzhou asked, “Who are you?”

Yunmen replied, “I am Wenyǎn.”

Muzhou said, “What do you want?”

Yunmen said, “My own matter is not yet clear. I beg the master for instruction.”

Muzhou opened the door, took one look at him, and immediately shut it again.

For three days in succession, Yunmen came and knocked on the door.

On the third day, Muzhou opened the door. Yunmen forced his way in, and Muzhou seized him, saying, “Speak! Speak!”

As Yunmen hesitated, Muzhou pushed him out, saying, “A spinning top from the Qin dynasty!” He then shut the door, injuring one of Yunmen’s feet.

Yunmen awakened from that point on.

[+] (pronounced very similarly to “tuóluó”) means “to turn.”

[+] refers to a spinning top—a toy that spins on the ground. When a spinning top is in motion, it stays fixed in one spot and keeps turning there.

“The Qin era” means the time of the Qin dynasty; it is a metaphor for something that has existed for a long time.

“A spinning top from the Qin dynasty” means: “You have long been attached in just this way!”

Ninety-Nine: There Must Be No Place to Settle

[Original Case]

On another day, he said: “When a Chan master teaches others, there must be no place to land. If there is a place to land, students will make their moves right before him.”

[Sawing Open a Steelyard Weight]

One day, Chan Master Dahui said: “As a Chan master, when freeing others from their attachments and bonds, one’s words must not come to rest anywhere. If they do, students will see through them and argue with you face-to-face.”

If everyone looks back at “90. The Dharma Eye Is Unclear,” you will understand why Chan Master Dahui spoke this way.

Chan Master Linji said: “If there is a genuine student, he immediately shouts! First, he presents a glue basin. If the spiritual friend cannot distinguish whether it is an object, he proceeds to put on a show in response to that object. The student then shouts, but the former will not let go. This is a disease in the vital organs, beyond cure. It is called ‘the guest observing the host.’”

If a Chan master has a place to land and students make their moves before him, this is “the guest observing the host.”

One Hundred: Cold Ashes and Popping Beans

Original Koan Text

One day he also said: “Just reduce your thoughts to ashes and look into them. Ash them away and away, until suddenly a bean in cold ashes bursts and flies out of the furnace—then you will be a person with nothing to do.”

Sawing Open the Scale Weight

One day, Chan Master Dahui also said: “Simply extinguish your thoughts and intentions, and investigate single-mindedly without cease. Ash them away and away, until suddenly, with a pop, it is like a bean in cold ashes bursting and flying out of the furnace. If you can do this, then you will be a person with nothing to do.”

The Chan method of investigating the huatou was advocated by Chan Master Dahui Zonggao. What Master Dahui is speaking of here is the key to investigating the huatou—reducing thoughts to ashes. Without reducing thoughts to ashes, it is impossible for a bean to burst from cold ashes. Without great death, how can there be great life? As the saying goes, “When you make thoughts die, I grant that your Dharma body lives.”

101. Impermanence Is Swift

[Original Text of the Koan]

When the master was at Baofeng, Senior Seat Yuan thought very highly of him. One day, he requested leave to pay a visit to Li Shanglao, saying that he would return within a month. He did not return until forty days had passed. When Yuan saw him, he immediately said, “Alas! Have you gone wild? Impermanence is swift!” The master could not help but break into a sweat.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

When Dahui Zonggao was studying Chan under Chan Master Zhenjing Kewen at Baofeng, there was a senior monk named Yuan among Zhenjing's disciples who was especially congenial with Dahui.

Once, Chan Master Dahui took a month's leave to visit Li Shanglao. He returned only after forty days, ten days late. When Senior Seat Yuan saw him, he said, "Alas! Have you gone wild? Impermanence is swift!" Chan Master Dahui could not help but break into a sweat.

Birth and death are a matter of great importance; impermanence is swift. We must diligently exert ourselves, as if rescuing our heads from fire! If this great matter has not yet been clarified, yet one becomes immersed in worldly social engagements, one is like a fish in scant water—what joy can there be in that? On seeing this koan, have we also broken into a sweat?

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Birth and death are a matter of great importance; impermanence is swift. We must diligently exert ourselves, as if rescuing our heads from fire! Fool's Dream 13:15:31 8/28/02 (68)

102. Even When It Is Raised, One Does Not Understand

[Original Koan]

While reading Dongshan's "Verse on Awakening," the Master became doubtful and said, "There is a 'him,' and there is an 'I'—what kind of Chan is this?" He therefore sought instruction from Zhan Tang, who said, "Recite it again." The Master then recited it. Zhan Tang said, "Even as you recite it, you have not understood." He then pushed him out.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Dongshan's "Verse on Awakening" says: "Above all, do not seek it from another; it is far removed from me. I now go on alone, yet everywhere I encounter him. He is now precisely I, yet I am not he. One must understand it in this way to accord with suchness."

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao had doubts after reading this verse: "There is a 'him,' and there is an 'I'—what kind of Chan is this?" So he went to consult Chan Master

Zhan Tang. Zhan Tang said, “Recite this verse once.” Dahui then began to recite the “Verse on Awakening”: “Above all, do not seek it from another …” Before he had finished, Zhan Tang said, “Even as you recite it, you have not understood.” Then he pushed Chan Master Dahui out.

In fact, Zhan Tang had already fully revealed the meaning of “He is now precisely I, yet I am not he,” and had enabled Dahui to enter into accord with it. He had already answered Dahui’s question completely:

Zhan Tang said, “Recite it again.” The Master then recited it—“He is now precisely I.”

Zhan Tang said, “Even as you recite it, you have not understood.” He then pushed him out—“Yet I am not he.”

103. What Will Be Transmitted?

[Original Text of the Koan]

Yuanwu said, “When Bodhidharma came from the West, what did he transmit?”

The master said, “You must not always interpret things like a wild-fox spirit.”

He further asked, “Seize the tiger’s head, gather in the tiger’s tail; in the first phrase, the essential purport is made clear.” What is the first phrase?”

The master said, “That is the second phrase.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Yuanwu’s two questions and Dahui’s two replies vividly reveal the first phrase that can “make the essential purport clear.” This is precisely what Patriarch Bodhidharma transmitted when he came from the West.

“This” is without characteristics and yet not without characteristics. It transcends language and cuts off thought; there is no place for you to open your mouth and no place for you to apply your mind.

“When Bodhidharma came from the West, what did he transmit?”—If one could bring forth this “what,” it would already have characteristics, and then it would not be it. Therefore Chan Master Dahui replied, “You must not always interpret things like a wild-fox spirit.”

“Seize the tiger’s head, gather in the tiger’s tail”—the tiger is a metaphor for thoughts. The tiger’s head is a metaphor for the point at which a thought arises. By the time a thought has just arisen, it is already the tiger’s tail. The metaphor means

this: if, at the point where a thought arises, one can “seize” it—grasp it at once—then one can gather in all thoughts, and every thought becomes wondrous functioning.

“In the first phrase, the essential purport is made clear”—the “first phrase” is without a phrase; once there is a phrase, one falls into the second and third. Only by apprehending the phrase within the phrase without a phrase can one be fit to understand the true meaning of the Buddhadharma.

“What is the first phrase?”—with this “what” present, it is already not the “first phrase.” Therefore Chan Master Dahui replied, “That is the second phrase.”

I wonder whether the Xiangyan Hanging from a Tree koan can serve as an annotation to this koan of the teacher’s? Kangkang 15:13:43 8/31/02 (344)

Ha ha! Why not let your whole body fall into the grass? lvm 18:40:57 8/31/02 (no content)

Ah, so after all that, the first phrase is the final phrase. Kangkang 11:04:05 8/31/02 (no content)

The first phrase—without beginning; the final phrase—without end. lvm 11:52:13 8/31/02 (no content)

~0~ Shangchi 11:38:57 8/30/02 (no content)

104. Truly a Fine Sight

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day, the Master said, “Here, we have no Chan that progresses day by day.”

He then snapped his fingers and said, “If you understand, then stop your investigation.”

He went on: “Nowadays, certain Chan masters receive people for private interviews three or five times, yet cannot bring out their understanding; instead, they tell them to speak of their awakening. They further ask, ‘What is your view?’ The student says, ‘What I have seen cannot be spoken of.

’ Then they say, ‘If you cannot speak of it, how can I see it in you?’ If this is how it is, how can they guide others? Have you not seen Dadao Quan go to Ciming? Ciming said, ‘A patch of cloud arises at the mouth of the valley; from where has this traveler come?’ Quan said, ‘Where was there a fire last night that burned open the tombs of the ancients?’ Ciming said, ‘Not there yet. Say more!’ Quan then gave a tiger’s roar. Ciming struck a sitting cushion.”

Quan pushed Ciming onto the Chan seat. Ciming, in turn, gave a tiger's roar. Quan said, "I have met eighty-four spiritual teachers; only you, Master, have inherited the style of the Linji school." Look at these few exchanges: this is where their realization is seen. It must be like this."

[The Elder's Marginal Note]

It truly makes for marvelous reading!

[Sawing Apart the Steelyard Weight]

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said, "Here, we have no Chan that progresses day by day." This means that Chan is not a field of learning that advances day by day; it is one of sudden awakening.

He then snapped his fingers and said, "If you understand, then stop your investigation." If someone were suddenly awakened at Chan Master Dahui's snap of the fingers, that snap would not have been in vain. Is there anyone? Is there anyone?

No, there is not! Since there is not, he gives two examples, one dark and one bright:

First example: "After receiving someone for private interviews three or five times, they cannot bring out that person's understanding, yet tell the person to speak of the place of awakening. They further ask, 'What is your view?' The student says, 'What I have seen cannot be spoken of.' Then they say, 'If you cannot speak of it, how can I see it in you?' If this is how it is, how can they guide others?"

For example, someone may call himself an "agricultural expert," yet know nothing of farming and be unable even to recognize the five grains. When others ask him about it, he still puts on the airs of an expert and tells them to explain it themselves. When they do not know, he says, "If you do not know, how could I know?" Ha, ha! Is this not deceiving people? What master could not act like that?

Second example: Dadao Quan went to see Ciming. Dadao Quan was Chan Master Faquan of Jiangshan, the eleventh generation after Qingyuan and the sixth-generation heir of the Yunmen school. Ciming was Chan Master Chuyuan of Shishuang, the tenth generation after Nanyue and the seventh-generation heir of the Linji school.

Ciming said, "A patch of cloud arises at the mouth of the valley; from where has this traveler come?"—Dadao Quan was like an inconspicuous patch of cloud, while Ciming's place of practice was like the mouth of a vast valley. Ha, ha! In asking where someone has come from, he assumes such a lofty stance. From this, one can see the Chan style of Chuyuan of Shishuang.

Quan said, “Where was there a fire last night that burned open the tombs of the ancients?”—I had thought this place was overgrown with wild grass and contained nothing. Who would have thought that, once the wild grass was burned away, the traces of the ancients would be revealed? This is praise, commending Ciming for having the manner of the ancients.

Ciming said, “Not there yet. Say more!”—He did not accept this praise. “I will not fall for your soft-knife tactics!”

Quan then gave a tiger’s roar.—Ha, ha! You take it for soft-knife tactics? This is no soft knife. If you did not possess the manner of the ancients, I would devour you. I shall be the mouth of the valley, and you are the patch of cloud.

Ciming then struck a sitting cushion.—This was striking the mountain to frighten the tiger. “If you dare act recklessly, I dare strike you!”

Quan pushed Ciming onto the Chan seat.—This is your place of practice, and the stick for striking people is clenched in your hand. Sit properly in your place of practice; I will not stir up trouble for no reason. It is only because you began by opening the mouth of the valley, intending to swallow me, a patch of cloud, that I spoke as I did.

Ciming, in turn, gave a tiger’s roar.—He was echoing what Dadao Quan had just said. “Do you not also mean to devour me?”

Quan said, “I have met eighty-four spiritual teachers; only you, Master, have inherited the style of the Linji school.”—Ciming rode the tiger by its head, while Dadao Quan held its tail; when it was time to draw in, he drew in. This fully shows that his words just now were not soft-knife tactics, but genuine praise.

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao praised the dialogue in the second example, saying, “It must be like this.”

The Elder also praised it, saying, “It truly makes for marvelous reading!”

105. Direct Mind, Direct Conduct

[Original Gong'an Text]

The Master said: “This mountain monk treats people sincerely, but they must also possess the proper capacity. This is to make a single leap straight into the ground of the Tathāgata. To investigate Chan, one must have a straight mind, straight conduct, straight speech, and direct words. Because the mind and words are straight, from beginning to end and throughout all stages, there are never any twisted

appearances. When the patriarch came from the West, he pointed directly to the human mind: see one's nature and become a Buddha. A monk asked Yunmen, 'What is Buddha?' Yunmen said, 'A dried shit-stick.' The moment one begins to deliberate and speculate, one has already become crooked—how much more so if one falls into empty abstraction!"

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said: "I treat students with sincerity, but students themselves must also be straight and unbending. Only those who possess a mind and conduct that are straight and unbending may be considered well endowed, for this is to make a single leap straight into the ground of the Tathāgata."

To investigate Chan, one must have a straight mind, straight conduct, straight speech, and direct words. Because the mind and words are straight, one readily accords with the Middle Way; a straight mind is the place of practice. All manner of schemes and clever calculations, all kinds of twisted mental attitudes, are in fact causes and conditions that obstruct the Way. When the patriarch came from the West, he pointed directly to the human mind: see one's nature and become a Buddha. Where is there any of those various twisted mental attitudes?

Since it is a direct pointing to the human mind, it allows no such twists and turns. Not to mention all kinds of twisted mental attitudes: even deliberating and speculating has already become crooked! For example, a monk asked Yunmen, "What is Buddha?" Yunmen replied, "A dried shit-stick." Upon hearing this reply, if one's mind is not straight, one will surely fall into empty abstraction and mistakenly think that a Buddha is worth less than a penny.

Not to mention those whose minds are not straight and who fail to grasp its meaning: even if one does not mistake it for something worth less than a penny, merely reasoning it out—"Why did Yunmen answer in this way?"—is already to miss it face-to-face. The kite has long since flown past Silla! The sword was lost long ago, yet you are only now making a mark on the boat! This is precisely a portrait of such a person.

[Related Links] (Click: Close/Open) [Related Links] (Click: Close/Open) [Related Links] (Click: Close/Open)

May I ask Teacher LVM: What is Buddha? Rénjué 09:38:03 9/02/02 (no content)

Rénjué is Buddha. Ren means to be benevolent and love all beings; jue means to break through deluded feelings. lvm 09:48:37 9/02/02 (no content)

The dharmakāyas of all Buddhas are utterly unobtainable. Rénjué 10:02:03 9/02/02 (36)

Because you do not understand that emptiness-nature is precisely form and appearance. lvm 10:32:06 9/02/02 (46)

Please help me eliminate my deluded feelings. Rénjué 14:49:11 9/02/02 (no content)

Please first bring out your deluded feelings. lvm 15:03:54 9/02/02 (no content)

Deluded feelings. Rénjué 16:12:52 9/02/02 (36)

Since that is so, they have been eliminated. lvm 17:20:12 9/02/02 (no content)

Excellent! Sudhana 20:35:09 9/02/02 (no content)

You are truly remarkable! In just a few words, you have laid Buddha-nature out in its entirety. I am deeply impressed! Kangkang 17:16:11 9/02/02 (no content)

106. In Praise of the True Dharma Ocean

[Original Text of the Koan]

When Wuwai asked the Master to compose an inscription for the portrait of Fahai, he said: “The senior masters of the upper river region greatly ridicule the Yunmen lineage of the lower river region, yet they do not ridicule Jueyin. This is because he had met Baoning Yong and Zhenjing and others, while Yuantong had met Elder Shun and Fushan Yuan; thus he differed from the rest. As for the larger and smaller Ben, and Tiejiao Fu and the like, they are all laughable. Fahai succeeded Jueyin, and Jueyin succeeded Yuantong.”

The inscription reads: “He broadens the gate of Yuantong and continues the Yunmen lineage. Serenely seated upon a Hu bed, he eyes the hundred freaks like a tiger. Wearing the seal of Vairocana, he subdues māras and non-Buddhists. One phrase meets them head-on; lightning is not swifter. Without moving from the place of practice, he enters samādhi. Whether praised or criticized, all incur white leprosy.” This is what is meant by saying that Elder Fahai could roam freely throughout the boundless dharma realm upon the tip of a single hair.

Yuantong once served as head seat under Master Duan and accepted an invitation from Simian. At that time, Master Yan was serving as mill manager at Haihui, and so succeeded him as head seat. When Yuantong moved to Qixian, Master Yan in turn succeeded him as abbot of Simian. Master Duan once composed an ancient-style verse containing the line, “The sun rises in the east; night falls in the west.” Yuantong changed the character ye (“night”) to ding (“samādhi”), and Duan smiled and accepted the change.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

This koan involves quite a number of figures. To make the main text immediately clear, let us first set out their Dharma lineages:

Fenyang Shanzhao Shishuang Chuyuan Huanglong Huinan Baofeng Kewen

Shoushan Xingnian [Linji school] Yangqi Fanghui Baiyun Shouduan

Yexian Guisheng Fushan Fayuan Baoning Renyong

Deshan Yuanmi Wenshu Yingzhen Dongshan Xiaocong Yunju Xiaoshun

Yunmen Wenyan [Yunmen school]

Xianglin Chengyuan Zhimen Guangzuo Xuedou Chongxian Tianyi Yihuai Yuantong Faxiu Jueyin Fahai Wuwai

Huilin Zongben Fayun Shanben

Changlu Yingfu

The Zhenjing mentioned in the text is Chan Master Baofeng Kewen; Elder Shun is Chan Master Yunju Xiaoshun. The larger and smaller Ben refer respectively to Huilin Zongben and Fayun Shanben. Tiejiao Fu refers to Chan Master Changlu Yingfu, while Yuantong refers to Chan Master Yuantong Faxiu (also known as Fayun Faxiu).

“Fahai zhen” refers to Elder Fahai’s portrait. After Elder Fahai passed away, his disciple Wuwai asked Chan Master Dahui Zonggao to write an inscription for his master’s portrait. Dahui Zonggao’s name was renowned throughout Chan circles; by doing this, Wuwai sought Master Dahui’s confirmation of Elder Fahai’s lifetime realization.

Master Dahui did not decline. Taking up his brush, he wrote: “He broadens the gate of Yuantong and continues the Yunmen lineage. Serenely seated upon a Hu bed, he eyes the hundred freaks like a tiger. Wearing the seal of Vairocana, he subdues māras and non-Buddhists. One phrase meets them head-on; lightning is not swifter. Without moving from the place of practice, he enters samādhi. Whether praised or criticized, all incur white leprosy.” The verse means that Elder Fahai could roam freely throughout the boundless dharma realm upon the tip of a single hair. Clearly, Master Dahui truly admired Elder Fahai’s realization; Elder Fahai was indeed extraordinary.

For this reason, Master Dahui cited two old incidents involving senior Chan masters:

First: The senior masters of the upper river region did not ridicule Jueyin.

The upper river region was largely the domain of the Linji school, while the lower river region was largely the domain of the Yunmen school. The senior masters of the upper river region generally derided the Chan masters of the lower river region as lacking decisiveness, still burdened by attachments, and dragging their feet. Although Jueyin, Elder Fahai's teacher, was also in the lower river region, these senior masters did not ridicule him.

This was because Master Jueyin's understanding was thorough: utterly bare and spotless, without attachment. Master Jueyin had consulted such great masters as Baoning Yong and Zhenjing Wen, so his understanding was naturally far from ordinary. Moreover, Jueyin's teacher, Yuantong Faxiu, had consulted Yunju Shun and Fushan Yuan; thus Jueyin differed from others. In fact, those whom the senior masters of the upper river region derided were only the larger and smaller Ben, Tiejiao Fu, and others of their kind.

Second: Yuantong Faxiu and Baiyun Shouduan.

The lineage inherited by Master Dahui Zonggao was precisely that of Baiyun Shouduan: Baiyun Shouduan Wuzu Fayan Yuanwu Keqin Dahui Zonggao.

Yuantong Faxiu once served as head seat under Chan Master Baiyun Duan. When Simian, the name of a monastery, invited Yuantong to serve as abbot, Wuzu Fayan, who had been managing the mill, succeeded him as head seat (see "95. Petty Men Are Jealous"). Later, Yuantong moved to Qixian, also the name of a monastery, and Chan Master Wuzu Fayan in turn succeeded him as abbot of Simian.

Chan Master Baiyun Duan once composed a verse containing the line, "The sun rises in the east; night falls in the west." Yuantong Xiu suggested changing the character ye ("night") to ding ("samādhi"), and Master Duan smiled and accepted the suggestion. This shows that Baiyun Duan held Yuantong Xiu in the highest regard.

Changing the character "night" to "samādhi" further reveals that his activity leaves no trace and his great functioning knows no fixed method. Shancai, 21:01:29, 9/02/02 (10)

That is why Baiyun Duan smiled and accepted it. lvm, 21:40:27, 9/02/02 (no content)

okok ^O^ Shancai, 22:02:56, 9/02/02 (no content)

107. The Fifth Patriarch's Thief Parable

Original Koan Text

One day, Chan Master Wuzu said, “What is the Chan here like? It is like a family skilled at thievery. They have a son who one day says, ‘When my father grows old, how will I support the household? I must learn a trade.’ So he told his father, who said, ‘Very well.’”

One night, the father led him to a wealthy household. They bored through the wall and entered the house. Opening a chest, he told his son to go inside and take some clothing and silk. As soon as the son entered the chest, the father shut and locked it. Then he made a commotion in the hall, waking the household, and slipped away first through the hole in the wall.

The household immediately arose and lit candles. They knew there had been a thief, but he had already gone. Inside the chest, the thief’s son said to himself, “Why has my father done this?” While despairing, he came up with a plan: he made the sound of a mouse gnawing. The household sent a maid to light a lamp and open the chest. As soon as it was opened, the thief’s son leapt out, blew out the lamp, knocked the maid down, and ran away. When the household chased him to the middle of the road, he suddenly saw a well. He pushed a large stone into it, and they searched for him in the well.

The thief’s son ran straight home and asked his father. His father said, “Say no more! How did you get out?” The son recounted the whole affair. His father said, “If you can do it like that, you can do it all.”

Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight

One day, Chan Master Wuzu Fayan said, “What is the Chan here like? Let me give an analogy.” He then raised the analogy of a thief:

“Like a family skilled at thievery”—ha! Thieves do not rob poor households. Why could he not have used some other analogy? He actually chose thievery—really! Yet if it is for the sake of robbing oneself of deluded thoughts and attachments, then this kind of “thief” is worth becoming.

“They have a son who one day says, ‘When my father grows old, how will I support the household? I must learn a trade.’”—Look! A student has arrived. The initial arousal of resolve is learning to become a thief.

“So he told his father”—he has come to ask a question: “How does one become a thief?”

“His father said, ‘Very well.’”—He agrees to teach him how to be a thief, but offers no verbal explanation.

“One night, the father led him to a wealthy household. They bored through the wall and entered the house. Opening a chest, he told his son to go inside and take some clothing and silk.”—Without verbally explaining how to be a thief, he first gives him a practical exercise. He leads you into the jar.

“As soon as the son entered the chest, the father shut and locked it”—he puts him in a place of death, from which life may arise.

“Then he made a commotion in the hall, waking the household”—let us see whether you can break through amid circumstances!

“And slipped away first through the hole in the wall”—hey! “Once the hair-blowing sword is put to use, it must be sharpened at once.”

“The household immediately arose and lit candles. They knew there had been a thief, but he had already gone”—they know that birth and death is a grave matter and impermanence swift, yet they can do nothing about it, so they set it aside for the moment. Most who do not seek liberation from birth and death are like this! Do not forget: someone is still trapped in the chest. How is he to escape?

“Inside the chest, the thief’s son said to himself, ‘Why has my father done this?’ While despairing, he came up with a plan: he made the sound of a mouse gnawing.”—When a rabbit is desperate, it not only bites people; it can even kick an eagle! At last, he has found a way.

“The household sent a maid to light a lamp and open the chest. As soon as it was opened, the thief’s son leapt out, blew out the lamp, knocked the maid down, and ran away.”—The moment the chest opens, there is a whoosh, like a great explosion—as though empty space were shattered and the great earth sank flat. Do not miss it right before your face. Leap out at once (turn your head around), blow out the lamp (extinguish mistaken views), knock down the maid (break through deluded attachments), and leave the chest (where there is Buddha, pass quickly by; where there is no Buddha, do not linger).

“When the household chased him to the middle of the road”—this is inertia. Habitual tendencies still remain!

“He suddenly saw a well. He pushed a large stone into it, and they searched for him in the well.”—Ha! What excellent safeguarding realization. Let them fish for him; pay them no heed.

“The thief’s son ran straight home and asked his father”—one seeking verification has arrived.

“His father said, ‘Say no more! How did you get out?’”—He does not concern himself with what happened then, but speaks only of the present.

“The son recounted the whole affair”—he lays everything out completely.

“His father said, ‘If you can do it like that, you can do it all.’”—No verbal affirmation is needed; it must be just so.

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Wonderful! Kang Kang 09:22:06 9/04/02 (no content)

108. Three Kinds of Saṅgha

[Original Koan]

The master said: Chan Master Yuantong Xiu, when snow was falling, said, “There are three kinds of monks when it snows. The superior ones sit in meditation in the monks’ hall; the middling ones grind ink and take up their brushes to compose poems about the snow; and the inferior ones gather around the stove and talk about food.”

In the winter of the Dingwei year, I personally saw these three kinds of monks at Tiger Hill and could not help laughing. Only then did I know that the words of the elders were not empty.

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

In ancient times, the Chan school followed a life of farming and Chan practice. Having everyone go out to work in the fields was called “collective labor.” When it snowed in winter, collective labor was impossible. What, then, did the student monks do?

Chan Master Yuantong Faxiu said: “There are three kinds of monks when it snows. The superior ones sit in meditation in the monks’ hall (Birth and death is a great matter; impermanence is swift! The snowfall gives them time, just right for investigating this great matter of birth and death.); the middling ones grind ink and take up their brushes to compose poems about the snow (Elegant! Yet they attend only to such peripheral matters and forget the fundamental.); and the inferior ones gather around the stove and talk about food (Ha ha! Although talking about food does not satisfy hunger, it seems they can still indulge their craving for it).”

Later, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao personally witnessed these three kinds of scenes at Tiger Hill. He could not help giving a wry laugh, and only then realized that the

words of the elders were not empty.

109. The Linji Style

[Original Koan]

When the monk Wuzu first called on Chan Master Yuanzhao, he had understood all the causes and conditions, ancient and modern, except for this: A monk asked Xinghua, “What if one comes from all four directions and eight sides?” Xinghua said, “Strike at the one in the middle.” The monk bowed. Xinghua said, “Yesterday I went to a village meal offering. On the way, I was caught in a sudden storm of violent wind and rain, but I managed to take shelter in an old temple.”

Wuzu therefore asked Yuanzhao for instruction. Yuanzhao said, “This is the style of the Linji school. Go ask his descendants.”

Wuzu then went to call on Fushan Yuan and asked about this koan. Yuan said, “There is an analogy: it is like a firewood seller from some little three-house village, carrying a shoulder pole, yet asking what matters are being discussed today in the Secretariat.” Wuzu said, “At such a time, that would be far from the point.” As Fushan Yuan was already old and hard of hearing, he directed him to call on a young elder, Baiyun Duan. “Although I do not know him personally,” he said, “I have seen his ‘Verse on Linji’s Three Blows with the Staff.’ His understanding is clear and clean. You may go to him for a decisive answer.” Wuzu followed this advice.

One day, Zhenjing said to Elder Huanglong, “Baiyun Duan’s ‘Verse on Linji’s Three Blows with the Staff’ accords with my own understanding.” Huinan said, “How do you understand his verse?” Zhenjing then recited the verse. Huanglong shouted, “Baiyun understands it. You do not!”

[Sawing Open a Scale Weight]

In the koan “Eight or Nine, Yet Another Rebirth,” we mentioned the monk Puhua, who studied under Chan Master Linji. Puhua once said: “When brightness comes, strike with brightness. When darkness comes, strike with darkness. When it comes from all four directions and eight sides, strike like a whirlwind. When emptiness comes, strike with the whole rack.”

A monk asked Xinghua, “What if one comes from all four directions and eight sides?”—“all four directions and eight sides” is a metaphor for having many affairs to deal with. How should one respond? This monk wanted to hear how one “strikes like a whirlwind.”

Xinghua said, “Strike at the one in the middle.”—Ha! Precisely in the eye of the typhoon. Without doubt, “the one in the middle” is a metaphor for one’s own mind.

The monk bowed. Xinghua said, “Yesterday I went to a village meal offering. On the way, I was caught in a sudden storm of violent wind and rain, but I managed to take shelter in an old temple.”

A sudden storm of violent wind and rain—this precisely corresponds to “all four directions and eight sides.”

But I managed to take shelter in an old temple—this was just the place to avoid the rain. The old temple is a metaphor for the true mind that has been there since beginningless time.

Chan Master Wuzu Fayan first studied Chan under Chan Master Huilin Zongben Yuanzhao of the Yunmen school. At the time, Wuzu could not penetrate the foregoing koan of “the monk asking Xinghua,” so he went to ask Chan Master Yuanzhao. Yuanzhao said, “This is the style of the Linji school. Go ask his descendants.”

Wuzu therefore went to consult Chan Master Fushan Fayuan of the Linji school. Chan Master Fayuan said, “There is an analogy: it is like a firewood seller from some little three-house village, carrying a shoulder pole, yet asking what matters are being discussed today in the Secretariat.” The Secretariat was the place where the court of the Song dynasty handled major military and state affairs.

A man carrying a shoulder pole to sell firewood nevertheless asks what the Secretariat is discussing that day. What this means is that, even if it were explained to you, you would not be able to grasp it at once. At that time, Fushan Yuan was old and hard of hearing and could not guide Wuzu over a long period, so he directed Wuzu to consult Chan Master Baiyun Shouduan. Fushan Yuan said to Wuzu, “Although I do not know him personally, I have seen his ‘Verse on Linji’s Three Blows with the Staff.’ His understanding is decisive and incisive. You may go to him and ask him to resolve this great matter for you.”

Later, Wuzu Fayan finally resolved this great matter under Chan Master Baiyun Shouduan and inherited the robe and bowl of Chan Master Baiyun.

When Zhenjing studied Chan with Chan Master Huanglong Huinan, he said to his teacher, “Baiyun Duan’s ‘Verse on Linji’s Three Blows with the Staff’ is the same as my own understanding.” Huanglong asked, “How do you understand his verse?” Zhenjing began to recite it. Huanglong stopped him with a shout: “Baiyun understands it. You do not!”

They all mentioned Chan Master Baiyun Duan's 'Verse on Linji's Three Blows with the Staff.' What is the content of this verse?

The verse says: "With one punch, the Yellow Crane Tower is knocked down; with one kick, Parrot Islet is overturned. Where there is spirit, add still more spirit; where there is no flair, there is flair as well."

"What kind of method is 'where there is spirit, add still more spirit'?" xinming 20:06:06 9/05/02 (no content)

"Where there is spirit"—there is; "where there is no flair"—there is not. lvm 22:40:48 9/05/02 (310)

110. Wrestling Before a Horse

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Yuanwu asked Wuzu, "What does Linji's 'Four Guest-and-Host Relationships' mean?"

Wuzu said, "It is merely a matter of setting limits; why concern yourself with such idle business?"

Wuzu said, "Here it is like wrestling before a horse: once one is thrown down, that is the end of it."

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Linji instructed the assembly: "Those who study the Way must be exceedingly careful. When guest and host meet, there is exchange of words. Sometimes one manifests a form in response to circumstances; sometimes one functions in one's entirety; sometimes one employs the strategic devices of delight and anger; sometimes one manifests half a body; sometimes one rides a lion; sometimes one rides the king of elephants."

"If there is a genuine student, he immediately gives a shout and first presents a glue pot. If the good spiritual friend cannot discern that it is an object, he begins to imitate it on its own ground. The student then gives another shout, but the former will not let go. This is a disease in the vital organs, beyond cure. It is called 'the guest examining the host.'"

"Or the good spiritual friend does not bring forth an object, but simply seizes whatever point the student raises. Having been seized, the student refuses to let go even unto death. This is 'the host examining the guest.'"

“Or a student may respond with a pure state and appear before the good spiritual friend. The teacher recognizes it as a state, 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 then bows in reverence. This is called ‘the host examining the host.’”

“Or a student, wearing a cangue and shackles, appears before the good spiritual friend, and the teacher adds another layer of cangue and shackles. The student rejoices, and neither recognizes what is happening. This is called ‘the guest examining the guest.’”

“Virtuous ones, all that this mountain monk has set forth is for distinguishing māras and discerning the unusual, so as to know what is deviant and what is correct.”

When Chan Master Yuanwu was studying Chan under Wuzu, he once asked Wuzu, “What do Chan Master Linji’s ‘Four Guest-and-Host Relationships’ mean?”

Wuzu said, “It is merely a matter of setting limits; why concern yourself with such idle business?”—That is, it merely draws distinctions according to levels of practice. Why are you meddling in so many irrelevant matters?

Wuzu continued, “Here it is like wrestling before a horse: once one is thrown down, that is the end of it.”—Ha! He revealed “the host examining the host” completely, presenting Yuanwu with the reality beyond words.

Is it a coincidence, or is there some ghost at work? Every post is so exactly timely—uncanny. Qinglong 11:18:57 9/06/02 (no content)

111. On Becoming a Buddha Through One’s Nature

[Original Koan Text]

Fojian had long practiced “Plain and Solid Chan.” Self-assured, he would not accept Wuzu’s teaching, saying instead, “He merely forces people to change.” Yuanwu said, “That is not the way of it; there is real substance in it. Look at how I was before—could I possibly have spoken as I do now?” Little by little, Fojian began to trust.

Later, when the line was raised, “The myriad things and all phenomena are stamped by the one Dharma,” he suddenly said, “When the patriarchs came from the West, they pointed directly to the human mind: see one’s nature and become a Buddha. Nowadays, in the various quarters, most point obliquely to the human mind and speak of seeing one’s nature and becoming a Buddha.”

[Sawing Apart a Steelyard Weight]

In “Twenty-Seven: Twists and Turns,” we mentioned the “three Buddhas” under Wuzu: Foguo (Yuanwu), Foyan, and Fojian.

Fojian had long practiced “Plain and Solid Chan.” He was extremely self-assured and dismissed Wuzu’s words, even saying that Wuzu “merely forces people to change.”

Foguo bore personal witness: “It is not as you say. In fact, every word of the master’s falls on solid ground. Look at what I was like before, and what I am like now. How could it be as you say?” Fojian gradually came to believe. Later, under Wuzu, he finally resolved this great matter.

Wuzu raised the saying: “The myriad things and all phenomena are stamped by the one Dharma.”

Fojian suddenly said, “When the patriarchs came from the West, they pointed directly to the human mind: see one’s nature and become a Buddha. Nowadays, in the various quarters, most point obliquely to the human mind and speak of seeing one’s nature and becoming a Buddha.”

Ha ha! From our perspective, Fojian too was bearing personal witness: “Look at what I was like before, and what I am like now.”

112. Resenting Others’ Talk of Chan

[Original Text of the Koan]

When Yuanwu was studying under Wuzu, the patriarch said, “You are quite good in every way; you merely have a few faults.”

Yuanwu asked repeatedly, “I do not know what faults I have.”

The patriarch said, “Only that you have too much Chan.”

Yuanwu said, “I came precisely to investigate Chan. Why, then, do you object to people speaking of Chan?”

The patriarch said, “It would be much better simply to speak as one ordinarily does.”

At that time, a monk asked, “Why do you object to people speaking of Chan?”

The patriarch said, “Bah! Emotional entanglement.”

[Sawing Open the Scale Weight]

When Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu was studying Chan under Wuzu, Wuzu said to him, “You are quite good, but you still have a few faults.”

Foguo repeatedly asked, “I do not know what faults I have. Please, Master, compassionately instruct me.”

Wuzu said, “There are no other faults; it is only that you have too much Chan.”

Foguo was greatly surprised: “I originally came to investigate Chan. Why has speaking of Chan instead become a fault?”

Wuzu told him, “Must you insist on setting up a thing called ‘Chan’? How much better it would be simply to speak as one ordinarily does.” Ha, ha! Chan without Chan is true Chan. Wuzu had laid Chan out in its entirety.

At that time, a student monk did not understand: Wuzu was a patriarch of the Chan school, so why did he object to people speaking of Chan? He therefore asked Wuzu, who replied, “Bah! Emotional entanglement.” That is not good; it, too, belongs to the sphere of emotional consciousness.

113. Beyond Words

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day, Wuzu questioned Yuanwu about the “seamless stupa.” Yuanwu was at a loss. He followed Wuzu straight from the abbot’s quarters to the main gate before he was able to say something.

The patriarch said, “Do you call that being able to speak of it?”

Yuanwu said, “No! If it is absent even for a moment, it will not do.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

National Teacher Huizhong of Nanyang was about to enter nirvāṇa and bade Emperor Daizong farewell. —Knowing in advance that his time had come, he took leave of the emperor.

Emperor Daizong said, “After the Master enters parinirvāṇa, what shall your disciple use to commemorate you?” —After you enter nirvāṇa, how are we to remember you?

The Master said, “Tell the donor to build a seamless stupa.” —Ha! That which is originally natural and spontaneous—how could it be attained through fabrication?

The emperor said, “Please provide a model for the stupa.” —A good reply! Hand this crying child back for you to hold. Release the killer and return the killer.

After a long silence, the Master said, “Do you understand?” —Do you truly understand?

The emperor said, “I do not understand.” —Perhaps he truly did not understand; perhaps he did not understand yet understood. What is it, after all? Ask Emperor Daizong!

The Master said, “After this poor monk has gone, my disciple Yingzhen will know this matter. I ask that an imperial edict be issued to question him.” —He entrusted this task to his disciple. This shows that Emperor Daizong truly did not understand.

On the nineteenth day of the twelfth month in the tenth year of the Dali era, he passed away lying on his right side. His stupa was erected in Dangzi Valley. —Do you all know where the National Teacher went?

Later, an imperial edict summoned Yingzhen and questioned him about the earlier words. After a long silence, Yingzhen said, “Does Your Majesty understand?” —Ha! Again, a long silence. The same lineage is transmitted.

The emperor said, “I do not understand.” —The National Teacher knew long ago that you would not understand.

Yingzhen recited this verse: —The remarks in brackets are Xuedou’s appended comments.

South of the Xiang, north of the Tan, [One palm does not resound; two hands clap noisily.]

There is enough gold within to fill a whole country. [A mountain-shaped staff.]

Beneath the shadowless tree, they join their boats together, [The sea is calm and the rivers are clear.]

On the crystal palace there is no one who knows. [It has already been picked up.]

Xuedou further composed this verse:

The seamless stupa is hard even to behold; the clear pool permits no blue dragon to coil within it.

Tier upon tier, distinct and clear; shadow upon shadow, round and full—through a thousand ages and ten thousand ages, for people to see.

In Case Eighteen of The Blue Cliff Record, Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu explains this seamless-stupa koan, together with Xuedou’s verse, with the utmost clarity. Yet when he first studied Chan under Wuzu, and Wuzu questioned him about the

seamless stupa, he was still at a loss and did not know what to do; for the moment, he could not speak of it. Only after following Wuzu from the abbot's quarters to the monastery gate did he manage to say a single sentence.

Wuzu said, "Do you call this being able to speak of it?"

Foguo said, "This cannot count as being able to speak of it. If it is absent even for a moment, one is like a dead person! After so long, I could say only one sentence; this cannot be called being able to speak of it."

Miyan Kingdom: Pervading everywhere without a hole to enter—can one leave through a seam? Vajra Measure 16:46:23 9/17/02 (no content)

Where, after all, did the National Teacher go? Little Junior Brother 07:46:57 9/11/02 (60)

Does this even need to be asked? Do not forget the "seamless stupa." lvm 15:58:29 9/11/02 (no content)

How many men who wet the bed with their eyes open does this seamless stupa bury... Flowers Bloom, Moon Full 21:55:23 9/16/02 (no content)

The National Teacher can close his eyes in peace. lvm 09:17:00 9/22/02 (no content)

! Sudhana 19:36:12 9/20/02 (no content)

Ultimately inseparable, ultimately unattainable: if it is absent even for a moment, it will not do. Still Deluded 22:32:06 9/10/02 (no content)

114. Forsaking the Ocean and Taking Foam for It

Original Case

After the students who had entered his room for instruction withdrew, the Master sat idly for a while and suddenly said: "Practitioners nowadays are full of conceptual views and interpretive understanding. They insist on memorizing idle words and lengthy sayings to answer questions here. It is much like holding a priceless maṇi jewel in one's hand: when someone asks, 'What is in your hand?' one puts it down and picks up a clod of earth instead. How utterly foolish! If this is how you practice, you will not awaken even in the year of the donkey."

Sawing Apart a Scale Weight

The student who had entered the room to ask for instruction had already withdrawn. Chan Master Dahui Zonggao was sitting at leisure when he suddenly

came out with these words:

“Practitioners nowadays are full of conceptual views and interpretive understanding. They insist on memorizing idle words and lengthy sayings to answer questions here.” — More than that, indeed! Even today, in this age of information and online society, what one sees is still largely the same.

“It is much like holding a priceless maṇi jewel in one’s hand.” — If someone asked for this jewel, who could pour out an entire basketful?

“When someone asks, ‘What is in your hand?’” — Answer him: “Precisely what is in your hand.”

“One puts it down and picks up a clod of earth instead. How utterly foolish!” — Truly, how utterly foolish! The clod of earth symbolizes conceptual views and intellectual understanding. Even if you crush it to pieces, scatter it upward until it becomes heavenly flowers, and have it fall back down as golden lotuses, it still has not the slightest connection with the maṇi jewel.

“If this is how you practice, you will not awaken even in the year of the donkey.” — There is no donkey among the twelve zodiac animals, so when will the year of the donkey ever come? If you are to awaken, awaken right now. Speak! Speak!

…Too late. Even if you could speak now, it would still be: “The sword has long since fallen into the water, and only then do you carve a mark on the boat!”

Hoo~, oh, ah—vastly open; no sages. Flowers bloom and the moon is full. 23:31:16 9/14/02 (no content)

How much difference is there between a clod of earth and a maṇi jewel? Shancai 16:05:44 9/11/02 (no content)

A puddle and the ocean! Jingangliang 16:39:50 9/17/02 (no content)

The fox’s tail has been exposed!~ Dingling 19:39:14 9/17/02 (no content)

A fox whose tail cannot be exposed is a false fox! Jingangliang 12:10:02 9/18/02 (no content)

Hehe, others may say that, but you may not. Shancai 17:51:06 9/17/02 (no content)

Though I may not say it, I said it anyway. Who told you to ask? “Mountain timber” has become “stinking vegetables”! Jingangliang 19:07:50 9/17/02 (no content)

Haha, even Jingang has times when he has to swallow his anger. Shancai 20:49:19 9/17/02 (69)

So long as you can become a Buddha, I would even be willing to hold in my piss and swallow your farts! Jingangliang 14:14:52 9/18/02 (no content)

What a spineless thing! Shancai 23:08:18 9/18/02 (20)

What a spirited Cai! Jingangliang 13:27:40 9/20/02 (no content)

Shancai has lost another round! Shancai 21:19:35 9/20/02 (no content)

This is a metaphor: lvm 16:14:28 9/11/02 (62)

115. Closing the Case According to the Applicable Provisions

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day the master said: “Here I have no Dharma to give people; I merely settle cases according to the particulars. Suppose you bring me a glass bottle and cherish it dearly. As soon as I see it, I smash it for you. Then you bring me a maṇi jewel, and I take it away from you. If you come to me like this, I cut off both your hands. Therefore, Chan Master Linji said: ‘Encounter a Buddha, kill the Buddha; encounter a patriarch, kill the patriarch; encounter an arhat, kill the arhat.’ Now tell me: if one is called a good spiritual friend, why would one kill people? Consider what principle is at work here.”

“Now, brothers, when you undertake practice and do not understand this, where is the fault? It is simply because you seek to understand it. For example: ‘It will not do to be thus; it will not do not to be thus; whether thus or not thus, neither will do—what then is it?’ If you offer a turning word, will you thereby understand it? You will never understand it!”

The people of old were exceedingly direct, yet you are unwilling to proceed from the place of directness. It is precisely because you seek utmost clarity that what you attain is instead delayed.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

One day, Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said:

“Here I have no Dharma to give people; I merely settle cases according to the particulars.”—I have nothing here to give you. I simply respond to the matter you raise, matching it to its proper place and drawing a conclusion.

“Suppose you bring me a glass bottle and cherish it dearly.”—For example, you bring a glass bottle here, fearing that it may break and cherishing it greatly. Why cherish it so? You take it to be a maṇi jewel, do you not? The glass bottle symbolizes mistaking something similar to Buddha-nature for the true suchness of one’s own nature.

“As soon as I see it, I smash it for you.”—This is not a maṇi jewel; smash it, and that is that!

“Then you bring me a maṇi jewel, and I take it away from you.”—Why take away a genuine maṇi jewel as well? Because if it is not taken away, there will be attachment. It is for fear that you may fall into images and concepts. A genuine maṇi jewel is for your use only, not for display; do not mistake it for something to grasp! The moment you grasp it, you have, in effect, sold an invaluable treasure cheaply!

“If you come to me like this, I cut off both your hands.”—To come “like this” means to come empty-handed, bringing nothing at all. When you come empty-handed, he cuts off both your hands! Why cut off even this? Because why flaunt your ‘two empty hands’? It is still contrivance!

“Therefore, Chan Master Linji said: ‘Encounter a Buddha, kill the Buddha; encounter a patriarch, kill the patriarch; encounter an arhat, kill the arhat.’”—Ha ha! So it turns out that this was taught by the patriarchs!

“Now tell me: if one is called a good spiritual friend, why would one kill people?”—This does not mean killing people, but killing the “appearance of a person.” One who can destroy your “appearance of a person” is truly worthy of being called a good spiritual friend.

“Consider what principle is at work here.”—Oh? Is there really any principle here to be discussed?

“Now, brothers, when you undertake practice and do not understand this, where is the fault?”—The fault lies in “not understanding this”; you have just said so yourself.

“It is simply because you seek to understand it.”—Could one attain it without seeking to understand it?

“For example: ‘It will not do to be thus; it will not do not to be thus; whether thus or not thus, neither will do—what then is it?’”—So it will not do not to seek to understand it, either.

“If you offer a turning word, will you thereby understand it?”—But if you do not offer a turning word, can you understand it?

“You will never understand it!”—Exactly: you can never understand it! It is understanding itself; what else is there to understand? Can the eye see itself?

“The people of old were exceedingly direct, yet you are unwilling to proceed from the place of directness.”—So this is where the problem lies! Yet how many are willing to proceed from the place of directness? It is not that they cannot; they simply are unwilling!

“It is precisely because you seek utmost clarity that what you attain is instead delayed.”—Of course, one cannot seek the “utmost.” Once one clings to an extreme, one becomes its opposite. Yet what is this “utmost”? Let us give an example: the summit of the Buddhadharma—the highest truth of the noble truths. Ha ha! Now you understand why Patriarch Bodhidharma said, “Vast emptiness, nothing holy,” do you not?

It is not flaunting “two empty hands”; the thief’s hands are still there (the thieving mind has not died)! Jingangliang, 16:32:36, 9/17/02 (no content)

Taken in. Renjue, 14:56:49, 9/17/02 (38)

116. Defecating and Urinating

[Original Text of the Koan]

One day, the master said: “All my life I have enjoyed scolding people. When I read The Recorded Sayings of Xuansha, I was delighted by the way he tested Lingyun, saying, ‘Precisely so, very precisely so! Yet I dare guarantee, old brother, that you have not thoroughly penetrated it!’ One could say he stood like a wall ten thousand fathoms high. But later, when he spoke with Lingyun, he said, ‘Only now are you thoroughly penetrated.’ Then afterward he went and shat and pissed like this! I asked Yuanwu about it, and Yuanwu smiled, saying, ‘What he did afterward in this way—I cannot make sense of it either.’ So I left and, upon returning to the attendants’ quarters, came to realize that Xuansha was making a great fuss! I then told Yuanwu about it, and Yuanwu smiled, saying, ‘I am glad that you understand.’”

Huitang said: “Nowadays, few teachers in the various quarters possess this medicinal ingredient.”

The master said: “By all means, do not let outsiders hear this coarse language.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

Chan Master Lingyun Zhiqin of Fuzhou was a native of Changxi in that prefecture. At first he was at Guishan. Upon seeing peach blossoms, he awakened to the Way and

composed this verse: “For thirty years I sought a master swordsman; / How many times have leaves fallen, then branches put forth anew? / Since first seeing peach blossoms, / I have never again doubted.” When Guishan read the verse, he questioned him about his realization and found that it accorded with his own. Guishan said: “Having awakened through conditions, you will never lose it. Guard and sustain it well.”

A monk repeated this to Xuansha, who said: “Precisely so, very precisely so! Yet I dare guarantee, old brother, that you have not thoroughly penetrated it!” The assembly was puzzled by these words.

Xuansha asked Dizang, “When I speak this way, how do you understand it?” Dizang said, “Had it not been Guichen, people throughout the world would run themselves to death.”

Lingyun awakened to the Way upon seeing peach blossoms and received Chan Master Guishan’s confirmation. Yet Chan Master Xuansha commented: “Precisely so, very precisely so! Yet I dare guarantee, old brother, that you have not thoroughly penetrated it!” Everyone was perplexed by this “not thoroughly penetrated.”

If he had not thoroughly awakened, would Chan Master Weishan have sanctioned him? Xuansha knew that everyone had doubts about this remark, so he asked his disciple Dizang Guichen, “When I speak in this way, how do you understand it?” His disciple answered most decisively: “Were it not Guichen, it would send everyone under heaven running to their deaths.”

“Fortunately, you asked me. Had you asked someone else, even if he ran all over the world and ran himself to death, he would still not find the answer.” Ha ha! After all, they were of the same household, and even its family treasures could no longer be concealed. Yet this sort of family treasure was later called by Dahui Zonggao “making a great fuss.” We shall discuss these strange words a little later.

Later, Lingyun personally met Xuansha and presented his understanding face-to-face. Xuansha then said: “Only now are you thoroughly penetrated.” One “not thoroughly penetrated,” the other “thoroughly penetrated”—enough to perplex everyone under heaven! To say “not thoroughly penetrated” might still count as “sweeping away the traces of awakening”; but what is meant by saying “thoroughly penetrated”? Dahui Zonggao could not abide it and considered Xuansha’s later words to be shitting and pissing.

He then went to the abbot’s quarters to ask his teacher, Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu. Foguo smiled and said: “What he did afterward in this way—I cannot make sense of it either.” Dahui remained puzzled by the matter. When he returned from the abbot’s quarters to the attendants’ quarters, he suddenly understood: Xuansha

had been making a great fuss! He ran back to the abbot's quarters and asked Foguo again. Foguo smiled once more: "I am very glad that you have thoroughly penetrated this matter."

It seems that Xuansha truly was making a great fuss. What sort of mischief was this? Do not be impatient! Do not be impatient! Raise another instance of the same mischief, and you will know:

Official Yuxiu asked Chan Master Ziyu, "What is Buddha?"

The master called, "Official!" The official responded.

The master said, "Seek no further."

When Yaoshan heard of this, he said, "Alas! What a pity that this fellow Yu has been buried alive in Ziyu Mountain."

When the official heard this, he went to see Yaoshan. Yaoshan asked, "I hear that, at Ziyu Mountain, you have been carrying out great Buddhist works. Is this so?"

The official said, "I would not dare." He then said, "I have heard that you have words that can save me, and so I have come especially today."

Yaoshan said, "If you have doubts, simply ask."

The official said, "What is Buddha?" Yaoshan called, "Yuxiu!" The official responded.

Yaoshan said, "What is it?"

At this, the official had an insight.

Ha ha! It truly was making a great fuss. Thus, to say that he was "shitting and pissing" was precisely medicine suited to the illness. Chan Master Huitang likewise regarded it as medicine suited to the illness; yet Chan masters capable of prescribing such medicine are not often seen. Therefore Huitang said: "Nowadays, few teachers in the various quarters possess this medicinal ingredient."

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao had already said: "All my life I have enjoyed scolding people." Indeed, "shitting and pissing" is unpleasant language enough. If one is not of the same household, it is hard to say how one might understand it. The words of those within this circle cannot be spoken to outsiders. Hence the saying: "By all means, do not let outsiders hear this coarse language."

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Dahui Zonggao—excellent! Vajra Measure 16:06:38 9/17/02 (no content)

117. No Final Phrase

[Original Koan Text]

A master, having seen an elder monk ascend the Dharma seat and say, “While attending my teacher, I obtained the final phrase; I cannot refrain from bestowing it upon the assembly.” After a long pause, he said, “Who is one who does not keep company with the myriad dharmas? When you swallow all the water of the West River in a single gulp, I will tell you.” Then he descended from the seat.

The master said, “This mountain monk would not put it that way: ‘While attending my teacher, I obtained the final phrase; I cannot refrain from presenting it to the assembly.’” He then descended from the seat.

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

An old Chan master once ascended the Dharma seat to speak on Chan. This is what he said: “While attending my teacher, I obtained the final phrase; I cannot refrain from bestowing it upon the assembly.” After a long pause, he added, “Who is one who does not keep company with the myriad dharmas? When you swallow all the water of the West River in a single gulp, I will tell you.” Having said this, he descended from the seat.

Ha ha! It is called the “final phrase,” yet how can it be so muddied by all that follows?

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao said, “If it were I, I would not say it that way.” How, then, would he say it? Like this:

“While attending my teacher, I obtained the final phrase; I cannot refrain from presenting it to the assembly.” He then descended from the seat.

Chan Master Dahui vividly demonstrates this: beyond the final phrase, there is no phrase.

It is not that there can be no speaking where there is no phrase. Have we not already seen it? Chan Master Dahui spoke precisely in this way.

118. Guizong Zibao

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Bao of Dongshan, Dharma heir of Reverend Jie of Wuzu, was from Luzhou. He was scrupulous and upright, and once served as administrator at Wuzu. When Jie fell ill, he instructed an attendant to obtain ginger from the storeroom to decoct as medicine, but Bao rebuked the attendant. When the attendant reported this to Jie, Jie told him to take money and buy it; only then did Bao produce the ginger and hand it over. Later, when Dongshan in Yunzhou lacked an abbot, the prefectural governor wrote to Jie, asking him to recommend someone he knew to take charge there. Jie said, “The fellow who sells ginger can take the post.” Bao accordingly began teaching publicly and resided at Dongshan; later he moved to Guizong.

One day, leaning on his staff, he went out and saw a procession clearing the way. He asked, “What official is this?” An officer replied, “The county magistrate.” He was told to make way, so Bao stood to the left of the road to avoid the procession. Suddenly he saw that the horse had knelt down and would not proceed. Bao said, “Even an animal recognizes a person.” The magistrate realized that he was Bao, bowed to him twice, and departed.

He later moved again to Yunju. One night, a mountain spirit carried him in a sedan chair around the monastery. Bao said, “Carry your grandfather, carry your grandmother! Carry me up to the abbot’s quarters.” The spirit then carried him back to the abbot’s quarters.

When Bao first traveled on pilgrimage, he once lodged at an inn and was harassed by a prostitute. He therefore yielded the bed to her and sat in meditation. At dawn, the prostitute asked for lodging money. Bao gave it to her, then went outside, burned his bedding, and left. The prostitute told her parents about Bao, and they invited him to their home, prepared a vegetarian meal in apology, and called him a true son of the Buddha.

He once composed “In Praise of Patriarch Bodhidharma,” which became widely circulated in Chan monasteries. Reverend Jue of Langye composed a verse in response to it; it is now included in the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.

A monk asked the Master, “I am unable to investigate Chan. I do not know where the problem lies.” The Master said, “The problem lies right here.” The monk said, “Why, then, am I unable to investigate?” The Master said, “You bed-wetter who sleeps with your eyes open—I’ll give you a beating!”

[The Elder’s Marginal Notes]

Look with urgency!

Sure enough, he missed it!

[Sawing Open the Steelyard Weight]

Chan Master Zibao of Dongshan was a Dharma heir of Reverend Jie of Wuzu. He had served as the monastery administrator at Wuzu's practice center. Once, when Wuzu was ill, he sent someone to take some ginger from the storeroom to use as an ingredient in medicine, but Dongshan Bao rebuked and sent him back. Wuzu then told someone to take money to buy it, and only then did Dongshan Bao bring out the ginger. No one was permitted to take the monastery's property for private use. Dongshan Bao handled affairs impartially and enforced the rules as firmly as a mountain; he faintly resembled Judge Bao in bearing.

The Dongshan practice center in Yunzhou lacked an abbot, so a local official wrote to Wuzu, asking him to recommend someone to serve as abbot of Dongshan. Wuzu said, "The fellow who sells ginger can take the post." Thus the ginger-selling fellow began teaching publicly and became abbot of Dongshan, and was therefore called "Chan Master Bao of Dongshan." Dongshan Bao later became abbot of the Guizong practice center, and was therefore also called "Reverend Bao of Guizong."

Reverend Zibao of Guizong later became abbot of the Yunju practice center as well. One night, a mountain spirit carried him in a sedan chair around the monastery. Guizong Bao shouted, "Carry your grandfather, carry your grandmother! Carry me up to the abbot's quarters." The mountain spirit then carried him back to the abbot's quarters. Those whose upright integrity is awe-inspiring and who harbor no crookedness will surely be revered by both humans and spirits.

One day, Guizong Bao went out leaning on his staff and saw someone sounding a gong to clear the way. He asked, "Which official is passing through here?" The gong-bearer told him, "The county magistrate is passing through here." He was then asked to make way, and Guizong Bao stood at the side of the road to avoid the procession. When the county magistrate's horse reached this spot, however, it knelt on the ground and would not move.

Guizong Bao said, "Though it is an animal, it recognizes a person." Only then did the county magistrate realize that this was Guizong Bao, and he repeatedly bowed to the monk. Those whose upright integrity is awe-inspiring and who harbor no crookedness are revered not only by humans and spirits; even animals hold them in the highest respect.

When Guizong Bao was first traveling on pilgrimage to investigate Chan, a prostitute pestered him at an inn. She slept in his bed and would not leave, so he sat in meditation until dawn. When she departed, she asked him for money, and he gave her the full amount. Because the prostitute had used his bedding, Guizong Bao burned it.

When the prostitute returned home, she told her parents about this. They were deeply moved, invited Guizong Bao to their home, prepared a vegetarian meal to apologize, and called him a true son of the Buddha. Everyone possesses a conscience. Although the prostitute's parents had induced their daughter into prostitution for money, they too were moved by such awe-inspiring uprightness. Of course, there are also those whose conscience has been utterly extinguished. Such people are not merely inferior to this brothel keeper; they are inferior even to animals—see the county magistrate's horse mentioned above.

Guizong Bao once composed "In Praise of Patriarch Bodhidharma," which spread throughout Chan monasteries at the time. Reverend Jue of Langye wrote a verse in response. This praise and this verse were included in the book Treasury of the True Dharma Eye. The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye records it as follows:

"Guizong Reverend Bao's 'Praise of the First Patriarch Bodhidharma, with Preface':"

The Master's true reality is utterly remote, unattached within the three realms.

If you would try to devise and arrange it, know that you are gravely mistaken.

Pointing and indicating in vain—where can it be felt for?

If you wish to recognize the Master's truth, heaven and earth are vast and open.

The Master's features—rarely seen in the world.

The Master's brows—like ranks of hanging clouds.

The Master's eyes—shining with lightning's radiance.

The Master's nose—towering like Mount Sumeru.

The Master's mouth has no teeth—whose fault is that?

You would cross the shifting sands—why do you not know your own error?

You and I are both men of realization—to whom will you transmit the Dharma?

You dwelt still longer at Shaolin, then returned westward.

When you encounter a patch-robed monk, it is well to give him a sound blow.

Although it is thus, for one who does not understand, do not use needle or awl.

Upon seeing this praise, Reverend Jue of Langye composed the following verse:

The Master's eyes—deep.

The Master's nose—dai [large; pronounced dai, which gives the verse its flavor].

The Master's ears—piercing.

The Master's tongue—quick.

The Master's body—dark.

The Master's mind—dai.

Carrying a single sandal in his hand, he returned across the shifting sands; the stone pagoda at Bear's Ear is still there today.

This verse alone can be used to test every patch-robed monk under heaven.

Miaoxi said, "The single character dai must not be altered. Alter it, and calamity arises."

The foregoing is the account in the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye. Miaoxi was the self-appellation of Chan Master Dahui Zonggao. The Treasury of the Chan School, which we are now discussing, was written by Dahui, as was the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.

Let us continue with Chan Master Zibao of Guizong:

A student monk asked Chan Master Bao of Guizong, "I am unable to investigate Chan. I do not know where the problem lies." Ha! You have already said it yourself, yet you ask someone else. Is not this mind that seeks to gain something precisely the problem?

The Master said, "The problem lies right here." Guizong had clear eyes and exposed it with a single utterance. Is it not precisely within you? At that moment, it was like a spark struck from stone, like a flash of lightning. If this monk had been quick-witted, he should immediately have turned the light inward, seized it in one grasp, and held it fast. The Elder's comment here reads: "Look with urgency!"

But who would have thought that this monk was utterly unalert? His whole mind remained fixed on "attaining," and he missed this excellent opportunity. Listen as he continues to question the Master: he cannot get beyond that "attaining."

The monk said, "Why, then, am I unable to investigate?" He stares wide-eyed and talks nonsense! Must he insist on clinging to "attaining" and "not attaining"? Whenever he lets go of this deluded thought, that is when he truly attains. He has already missed it! The Elder's comment reads: "Sure enough, he missed it!"

The Master said, “You bed-wetter who sleeps with your eyes open—I’ll give you a beating!” Your eyes are wide open, yet you lie stuck in bed, unwilling to move from your nest. How can you keep holding on like this? If I do not beat you, the teachers everywhere will laugh at me!

119. Receiving the Way According to One's Faculties

[Original Text of the Koan]

Chan Master Huai said to Xiuyuantong: “Yuan of Qingzhou, Qing of Fujian, and you—the three of you—will greatly revitalize our school. All the rest receive the Way according to their capacities.”

[Sawing Apart a Scale Weight]

The Chan Master Huai referred to here is Chan Master Tianyi Yihuai of the Yunmen school. His teacher was Chan Master Xuedou Chongxian, the author of One Hundred Verses on Ancient Koans by Xuedou. According to the Record of the Five Lamps alone, Chan Master Tianyi Yihuai had as many as thirty-six Dharma heirs.

Among his several dozen successors, only three were able to revitalize the Yunmen school; all the rest received the Way according to their capacities. This shows that realizing the Way oneself (realizing the essence) is one matter, while elucidating the school’s style (bringing its function into play) is another. Yet realization of the essence admits of no difference, whereas the bringing forth of function takes many forms. For example, after realizing the essence, some may not necessarily elucidate the school’s style, but instead bring forth function by transforming the physical body into a rainbow body. Thus Chan Master Puhua, who transformed into a rainbow and departed, did not sit on a Dharma seat and teach Chan.

120. Not Forgetting the Entrustment

[Original Koan Text]

When Chan Master Doushuai Yue was head seat under Daowu Zhongyuan, Venerable Zhì was residing at Yungai. One day, Yue led several dozen monastics to pay a visit to Zhì. After they had exchanged only a few words, Zhì discerned the depth of Yue’s realization and, smiling, said, “The head seat appears to possess extraordinary bearing. Why, then, does everything you say and every breath you exhale resemble that of a drunken man?” Yue’s face flushed, and sweat poured down. He said, “I hope the Venerable will not withhold his compassion.”

They spoke again, and before long Zhì pricked him once more. Yue was utterly at a loss, so he led his followers in requesting an interview in the master's room. Zhì smiled and said, "You, Head Seat, expound the Dharma, whereas one such as I has neither broad learning nor extensive experience. How could I benefit you?" Yue entreated him repeatedly. Zhì said, "This old monk has no blessings; my Way does not win people's trust. If I were to accept the Head Seat's bows, I would surely incur his slander someday." In the end, he would not agree.

Zhì then asked Yue, "Have you ever met Chan Master Fachang Yù?" Yue replied, "I have read his Recorded Sayings. I can manage on my own and do not wish to meet him." Zhì asked again, "Have you ever met Venerable Wen of Dongshan?" Yue replied, "That fellow from Guanxi has no brains. Dragging about a cloth skirt, he reeks of urine. What is so remarkable about him?" Zhì said, "Head Seat, just investigate that 'reek of urine.'"

Following the instruction, Yue went to Dongshan and relied on him. Before long, he deeply grasped the profound meaning. He then went again to see Venerable Zhì, who asked, "Head Seat, after meeting that fellow from Guanxi, how fares the great matter?" Yue replied, "Had I not received the Venerable's guidance, I would have wasted my whole life." He then burned incense, bowed, and gave thanks.

Later, when he began teaching publicly, he became Dongshan's Dharma heir. He habitually admonished his disciples by recounting how Yungai had directed him to see Dongshan: "You should serve Venerable Zhì as your teacher."

Later, when Zhì passed away, Chan Master Zhào—Yue's eminent disciple—was residing at Doushuai. Zhì's funeral affairs were entirely handled by Master Zhào, with the rites appropriate between teacher and disciple. This was because he had not forgotten the instruction entrusted to him.

[The Elder's Marginal Comment]

In cultivating the Way, if one does not receive the guidance of a clear-eyed person, one may miss far more than a single lifetime! This is why such a teacher is more precious than one's parents.

Alas, most people today neither respect nor support their teachers. With meager virtue and shallow roots, how can they hope to succeed in studying the Way!?

[Sawing Open a Steelyard Weight]

When Chan Master Doushuai Congyue was serving as head seat under Chan Master Daowu Zhongyuan, Venerable Zhì (Chan Master Yungai Shouzhi) was abbot of Yungai.

One day, Head Seat Congyue led several dozen student monastics to consult Venerable Zhì. Before they had exchanged more than a few words, Venerable Zhì knew the depth of the head seat's realization. Smiling, he said, "The head seat appears to possess extraordinary bearing. Why, then, does everything you say and every breath you exhale resemble that of a drunken man?" These words made the head seat's face flush and brought sweat streaming down.

The head seat was a genuine Chan practitioner. (If he had been a person of today, he would have shown Venerable Zhì the soles of his feet.) He earnestly requested instruction: "I hope the Venerable will not withhold his compassion."

They spoke again, and before long Zhì pricked him once more. Ha ha! Everything he said and every breath he exhaled still resembled that of a drunken man.

Yue was utterly at a loss, so he led his followers in requesting an interview in the master's room. To request an interview in the master's room meant that he wished to take Venerable Zhì as his teacher.

Zhì smiled and said, "You, Head Seat, expound the Dharma, whereas one such as I has neither broad learning nor extensive experience. How could I benefit you?" He actually excused himself on the grounds that his learning and experience were insufficient, refusing to accept this disciple.

Yue entreated him repeatedly. He simply had to take him as his teacher!

Zhì said, "This old monk has no blessings; my Way does not win people's trust. If I were to accept the Head Seat's bows, I would surely incur his slander someday." In the end, he still would not agree.

Zhì then asked Yue, "Have you ever met Chan Master Fachang Yù?" Chan Master Fachang Yiyu was a fifth-generation heir of the Yunmen school.

Yue replied, "I have read his Recorded Sayings. I can manage on my own and do not wish to meet him." It turned out that his Dharma affinity did not lie with Yunmen.

Zhì asked again, "Have you ever met Venerable Wen of Dongshan?" Venerable Wen of Dongshan was Chan Master Baofeng Kewen, also known as Zhenjing, and a fellow disciple of Venerable Zhì.

Yue replied, "That fellow from Guanxi has no brains. Dragging about a cloth skirt, he reeks of urine. What is so remarkable about him?" It turned out that Yue looked down on him.

Zhì said, "Head Seat, just investigate that 'reek of urine.'" Do not look down on him. First go and rely on him; in time, you will know for yourself.

Following Zhì's instruction, Yue went to Dongshan and relied on him. Following Venerable Zhì's guidance, he relied on Chan Master Zhenjing; now he had found his teacher.

Before long, he deeply grasped the profound meaning. The incident concerning his encounter with Head Seat Qingsu is omitted here, since it has already been described in detail in koan 52, "Head Seat Qingsu."

He then went again to see Venerable Zhì, who asked, "Head Seat, after meeting that fellow from Guanxi, how fares the great matter?" Ah—how ashamed he must have felt! Better not mention the phrase "that fellow from Guanxi."

Yue replied, "Had I not received the Venerable's guidance, I would have wasted my whole life." He then burned incense, bowed, and gave thanks. Thank you for the kindness of showing me the way.

In koan 52, "Head Seat Qingsu," the incident of Chan Master Doushuai Congyue's meeting with Head Seat Qingsu was explained in detail. Head Seat Qingsu instructed him: "What Wen [Venerable Wen of Dongshan] has shown you is all right view. Although I have pointed this out to you and enabled you to use it freely, I fear that you will leave your teacher too early and be unable to receive his Way in its entirety.

Never become my Dharma heir in the future!" Because this instruction had been given beforehand, when Venerable Zhì questioned him, he did not mention Head Seat Qingsu. Chan Master Yungai Shouzhi was a Dharma heir of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan. Chan Master Daowu Zhongyuan, mentioned above, was a Dharma heir of Huanglong Zuxin; and Chan Master Doushuai Huizhao, mentioned below, was a Dharma heir of Doushuai Congyue. Their lineage relationship was as follows:

Yungai Shouzhi

Huanglong Zuxin Daowu Zhongyuan

Shishuang Chuyuan Huanglong Huinan Baofeng Kewen Doushuai Congyue Doushuai Huizhao

Head Seat Qingsu

Later, Chan Master Doushuai Congyue began teaching Chan publicly and became the Dharma heir of Venerable Wen of Dongshan. Not forgetting Venerable Zhì's kindness in directing him, Master Doushuai often told his disciples how Venerable Zhì had directed him to see Dongshan. He further instructed the assembly: "You should honor Venerable Zhì just as you honor your own teacher."

When he spoke these words, he surely also recounted the incident of meeting Head Seat Qingsu. Yet Head Seat Qingsu was senior in age and had already passed into parinirvāṇa, so it was no longer possible to instruct disciples to respect and support him. Had Congyue not spoken of the matter at that time, how could it later have reached the ears of Chan Master Dahui Zonggao? If Chan Master Dahui, the author of The Armory of the Chan School, had not known of this matter, that work would not contain koan 52, “Head Seat Qingsu.”

Later, Venerable Zhì passed into parinirvāṇa. His funeral affairs were handled by Chan Master Doushuai Huizhao, who observed every rite as one would toward a teacher. By then Chan Master Doushuai Congyue had already passed into parinirvāṇa. Huizhao acted in this way because he had not forgotten his former teacher’s instruction.

The Venerable Master, Master Yuanyin, commented: “In cultivating the Way, if one does not receive the guidance of a clear-eyed person, one may miss far more than a single lifetime! This is why such a teacher is more precious than one’s parents.”

At the same time, the Elder lamented the students of the present age: “Alas, most people today neither respect nor support their teachers. With meager virtue and shallow roots, how can they hope to succeed in studying the Way!?”

Namo Fundamental Guru, Acharya Yuanyin! Sudhana 20:39:54, 9/17/02 (no content)

121. Only Upon Seeing With One’s Own Eyes Does One Truly Know

Original Text of the Koan

One day, the master said: “A bodhisattva sees Buddha-nature with the eyes. It must be seen with the eyes!”

(End of Chan Master Dahui Pujue’s Armory of the Chan School)

Sawing Apart the Scale Weight

Master Yuanyin said the following in A Brief Discussion of Realizing the Mind and Seeing One’s True Nature:

After we realize this true state, we look back and only then recognize that this “spiritual knowing” is nowhere else; all day long, it shines forth at the gateways of the six sense faculties. It is not separated from us in the slightest, with not the least interval between us. Every word, action, movement, and gesture is none other than its wondrous spiritual function. In the past, we endured countless hardships and

searched and sought for it in every way, yet it was right before us all along, though we did not recognize it.

Instead, we defile and humiliate it, suffering rebirth in the six realms. How unjust and painful that is! The ancient masters said: “The phrase before sound is not transmitted even by a thousand sages; the slightest thing before one’s face has never been separated throughout all time!” They also said: “Having worn out iron shoes in fruitless search, one finds it without the least effort.” This is precisely what they meant.

Yes! Look about you: the sun rises and the moon sets—everything returns to the highest truth; crows caw and sparrows chatter—all are the unsurpassed true vehicle. Everything before our eyes is Buddha-nature. Is there even the slightest thing outside Buddha-nature?!

(End of the Elder’s marginal notes, and also the end of “Sawing Apart the Scale Weight.” ^o^)

Finally, Zhong Bushuo says nothing, haha ^o^ Zhong Bushuo 16:56:08 9/18/02 (No content)

A story excerpted from Guangdong Buddhism: Qinglong 10:46:53 9/19/02 (939)

Haha! Yes—when has anything ever been said? lvm 17:23:35 9/18/02 (No content)

End of Chan Master Dahui Pujue’s Armory of the Chan School. lvm 08:37:41 9/18/02 (No content)

The teacher’s insight is profound. It would be wonderful if such an excellent piece could be edited and published. Lion 15:37:07 9/18/02 (No content)

Wonderful, wonderful! Zhishu 15:30:47 9/20/02 (No content)

I enthusiastically support this! Sudhana 23:10:13 9/18/02 (No content)

Precisely! Precisely! Dingling 15:46:28 9/18/02 (No content)

Teacher, you have worked so hard! Kangkang 11:14:09 9/18/02 (No content)

All together: “Serve the people!” lvm 14:17:39 9/18/02 (No content)

Praise! Xinming 15:57:48 9/18/02 (No content)

Hahahaha. Either no humor at all, or a single silence like thunder. Truly delightful. :) Chan Diy i 14:35:20 9/18/02 (No content)

^o^ lvm 15:50:33 9/18/02 (No content)

Appendix I: Qin Guan's "On the Two Seasons"

In Fujian there was a man named Hou Bai, who was skilled at devising schemes to cheat people. The people of the surrounding villages both hated and feared him, and none dared contend with him. One day, he met a woman named Hou Hei on the road. She stood beside a well, pretending that she had lost something. Hou Bai asked her curiously.

Hou Hei said, "Unfortunately, I dropped an earring into the well. It is probably worth one hundred taels of gold."

"If anyone can retrieve it, I will give half of it as thanks. Would you not be willing to do this?" Hou Bai pondered for a long time before devising a plan. He said, "You are a woman and have lost an earring. If I retrieve it, you must certainly give me half; otherwise, I will not give it to you." She then agreed to this.

Hou Bai took off his clothes beside the well and then climbed down into it. When Hou Hei judged that Hou Bai had reached the water's surface in the well, she gathered up all of Hou Hei's clothes and disappeared, no one knowing where she had gone. Thus, people in Fujian now refer to those who scheme against one another by saying, "I am already like Hou Bai; he is even more like Hou Hei."

Appendix Two: Yu Rang, Who Died for One Who Recognized Him

(See "72. The Prince Consort Writes a Hymn.")

Yu Rang was a native of Jin. Formerly, he had served the ministerial houses of Fan and Zhonghang, but gained no reputation. After leaving them, he entered the service of Zhibo, who treated him with exceptional respect and favor. When Zhibo attacked Zhao Xiangzi, Zhao Xiangzi joined with Han and Wei to destroy him. After Zhibo was eliminated, the three houses divided his territory among themselves.

Zhao Xiangzi hated Zhibo most of all, and had his skull lacquered into a drinking vessel. Yu Rang fled into the mountains and said, "Alas! A worthy man may die for one who understands him, and a worthy woman adorns herself for one who delights in her."

"Now Zhibo was the one who truly understood me. I shall surely avenge him by offering up my life, thereby repaying him. Then, even in death, my spirit will have nothing to be ashamed of." Thereupon he changed his name and surname,

disguised himself as a punished convict, and entered Zhao Xiangzi's palace to repair the latrine. Concealing a dagger on his person, he intended to assassinate Zhao Xiangzi.

When Zhao Xiangzi went to the latrine, his heart suddenly trembled. He had the convict repairing it seized and questioned, and discovered that he was Yu Rang, with a sharp blade tucked inside his clothing. Yu Rang said, "I have come to avenge Zhibo!" The guards wanted to kill him. But Xiangzi said, "He is a righteous man. I need only be cautious and avoid him. Moreover, Zhibo left no heir after his death, yet one of his retainers wishes to avenge him. Such a man is a worthy person under Heaven." In the end, he released him.

Not long afterward, Yu Rang again smeared lacquer over his body, causing his skin to swell and ulcerate as though he had leprosy. He swallowed charcoal to make his voice hoarse and rendered his figure and features unrecognizable. He begged for food in the streets; even his wife no longer recognized him.

He met a friend on the road, who recognized him and said, "Are you not Yu Rang?" He replied, "I am." His friend wept for him and said, "With your abilities, if you were to place yourself in Zhao Xiangzi's service, Xiangzi would surely draw you close and favor you."

"Once he had drawn you close and favored you, could you not then do what you wished to do? Would that not be much easier? Why torment your own body and disfigure your appearance, seeking by such means to avenge yourself on Zhao Xiangzi? Would that not be far more difficult?" Yu Rang said, "Having placed myself in another's service, were I then to kill him, I would be serving my lord while harboring ulterior motives."

"I know that this course is exceedingly difficult. Yet the very reason I have chosen it is to make those ministers throughout the world, in future ages, who serve their rulers while harboring ulterior motives feel ashamed!"

After saying this, Yu Rang departed. Before long, Xiangzi was traveling out, and Yu Rang concealed himself beneath a bridge that Xiangzi was certain to cross. When Xiangzi reached the bridge, his horse was startled. Xiangzi said, "This must be Yu Rang." He sent someone to investigate, and it was indeed Yu Rang.

Xiangzi then enumerated his offenses and reproached him: "Did you not once serve the houses of Fan and Zhonghang? Zhibo destroyed them both, yet you did not avenge them. Instead, you placed yourself in Zhibo's service as his retainer."

"Now that Zhibo is dead, why are you alone so eager to avenge him?" Yu Rang replied, "When I served the houses of Fan and Zhonghang, they treated me as an

ordinary man, so I repaid them as an ordinary man would. As for Zhibo, he treated me as a man of the realm, so I repay him as a man of the realm should."

Xiangzi sighed deeply and, weeping, said, "Alas, Master Yu Rang! In avenging Zhibo, you have already won renown; and I, too, have done enough in sparing you. You should make your own plans. I cannot let you go again!" He ordered the soldiers to surround him on all sides.

Yu Rang said, "I have heard that an enlightened ruler does not obscure another's good name, and that a loyal minister may rightly die for the sake of a good name. When you formerly spared me, no one under Heaven failed to praise your wisdom."

"In today's matter, I ought to suffer the penalty of death. But I hope that I may obtain one of your garments and stab it several times. That would fulfill my wish to avenge him; then, even if I died, I would have no remaining regret."

"I do not presume to expect that you will grant my request, yet I venture to state my heart." Xiangzi greatly admired his chivalrous righteousness and sent someone to give Yu Rang one of his own garments. Yu Rang drew his precious sword, leapt up, and repeatedly stabbed it, saying, "By this I may repay Zhibo in the world below!" He then killed himself with his sword. On the day of his death, when men of aspiration in Zhao heard the news, they all wept for him.

Appendix Three: Main Lineage Chart of the Chan School (For Reference)

Appendix Three: Main Lineage Chart of the Chan School (for Reference)

注：1、本表仅是部分法脉。

2、在同框的紫色为同辈传人，用"/"分隔列示。

