Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Zhaozhou Congshen

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Imperially Composed Preface to the Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Zhenji Zhaozhou Congshen

When Bodhidharma came from the West, he faced the wall for nine years. Though he spoke few words, he was able to point directly to the human mind, so that one sees one’s nature and attains Buddhahood. He was the first to establish the Chan tradition in China. Later generations expounded and upheld it, illuminating its provisional and ultimate applications. They sounded the poison drum and wielded the edge of the great sword beyond the reach of words and images, before forms and names had yet arisen. Their responsiveness was like lightning flashing and thunder racing; their discourse like rivers flowing into the sea.

Blue lotuses scattered profusely from their tongues; the great lion’s roar resounded throughout the ten directions, piercing the ears of hundreds of thousands of Buddhas and leaping beyond the thirty-three heavens. Yet, when one investigates where it all leads, it is no more than spreading thorns and brambles, with branches growing everywhere: licorice and coptis, the sweetness and bitterness of one’s own mind. Thus, benefiting oneself and benefiting others surely do not depend on many words.

Chan Master Zhaozhou Congshen fully realized the forbearance of the unborn dharmas and received people through the fundamental matter. The paulownia at Dragon Gate stands a hundred feet high without branches. I have read his sayings: truly, as it is said, when skin and flesh have been entirely stripped away, the one

reality alone is revealed. He was indeed one of whom Bodhidharma was mindful and protective.

A single drop of lion's milk is enough to scatter a thousand measures of donkey's milk. Yet the Chan master's teachings are like five-colored pearls. If those of shallow knowledge and limited understanding seek comprehension in the words themselves, they betray the compassion of the ancient Buddhas and their grandmotherly concern in descending into the weeds. Whatever the master casually picked up or freely uttered enabled wise people throughout the ten directions to enter directly, all at once, the ground of the Tathāgata. It may be said that he stood like a cliff ten thousand fathoms high, while the moon's reflection appeared in a thousand rivers. Zhaozhou's way of receiving people was truly that of the ancient Buddhas: direct pointing to the human mind, seeing one's nature and attaining Buddhahood. I have therefore recorded its essential passages in this volume to show later students the model and standard of the true tradition. Thus it is, thus it is.

Full-moon day of the fifth month, guichou year, the eleventh year of the Yongzheng reign

Preface to the Reprint of the Recorded Sayings of Patriarch Zhaozhou

I have heard that, at the age of eighteen, he left home and dispersed the household, skillfully wielding the sword of Tai'a; before sages and worthies, he let the guest usurp the host and improvised according to the occasion.

"Bringing not a single thing, one is then told to put it down." When not a single thought arises, he points to Mount Sumeru. Each time he picks up a blade of grass, he calls it a sixteen-foot golden body; with but one tooth in his mouth, he fully knows the flavors of the world. As for Zhaozhou's radish, teachers everywhere vainly claim that it was the Master's transmission; as for Qingzhou's cloth shirt, students should not seek the point in his words.

An honest old fellow, at the critical moment of killing or giving life, at once surpassed the use of sticks and shouts. With his three-inch soft tongue, he moved freely in every direction—when did he ever resort to strange sayings or eccentric words? It was like pressing down a gourd on water: with lowered hands, he pressed here and there. It was like a precious mirror hanging in the room: ordinary beings might come, or sages might come, just as they pleased. When the supreme vehicle was brought up, he would rinse his mouth for three days at the mention of Buddha-

recitation. He was skilled at dragging through mud and water, answering each question with being or nonbeing.

The true son of Nanquan and the grandson of Mazu—there was only this one old man. When he manifested his traces, a soaring serpent entered his mouth, and he was content to eat chaff. When his present retribution was transformed, a bright pearl emerged from the sea, and two kings made offerings to him. Could he not, then, have been a former Buddha manifesting in order to benefit living beings?

It is regrettable that his Recorded Sayings could not be transmitted in full. Students have obtained only one fascicle, truly like tasting one morsel from a cauldron or drinking a single drop from the sea. Yet the old woodblock edition has endured many years, and its characters have become blurred. Our fellow disciple Mingsheng has resolved to recarve and reprint it, making it known to later generations. This truly repays the Patriarch's kindness and deeply accords with the wishes of this old man. Appreciating his aspiration, I have casually appended a few words. His complete functioning and great activity are not things that my meager intellect can comprehend. Those who plumb the depths and penetrate the subtleties will surely have masters of broad understanding to write of them.

Written by Sanmu Yuancheng, abbot of Yunmen Xiansheng Monastery and twenty-seventh-generation transmitter of the authentic Caodong lineage

The Recorded Sayings of Chan Master Zhaozhou

(I) Ordinary Mind Is the Way

The master asked Nanquan, "What is the Way?"

Nanquan said, "Ordinary mind is."

The master said, "Can one still direct oneself toward it?"

Nanquan said, "The moment you intend to move toward it, you go astray."

The master said, "If one does not intend to move toward it, how can one know that it is the Way?"

Nanquan said, "The Way does not belong to knowing or not knowing. Knowing is deluded awareness; not knowing is blank indeterminacy. If one truly reaches the Way beyond doubt, it is like vast empty space—open and unobstructed. How could one forcibly impose right and wrong upon it?"

At these words, the master suddenly awakened to the profound meaning, and his mind became like a bright moon. (II) The Old Man in the Abbot's Quarters Ought to

Receive This Blow

Nanquan ascended the hall to teach.

The master asked, “Does it fit on the bright side, or does it fit on the dark side?” Nanquan immediately returned to the abbot’s quarters.

The master then left the hall, saying, “When I asked that old monk a question, he was utterly unable to answer.”

The head seat said, “Do not say that the master had nothing to say; it is simply that you, Senior Monk, do not understand.”

The master struck him. He also said, “This blow properly belongs to the old man in the abbot’s quarters.” (III) Go Become a Water Buffalo

The master asked Nanquan, “Where does one who knows that there is [such a thing] go?”

Nanquan said, “To the lay donor’s house in front of the mountain, to become a water buffalo.”

The master said, “Thank you, Reverend, for your instruction.”

Nanquan said, “At midnight last night, the moon came to the window.” (IV) Fire! Fire!

While serving as the stove attendant at Nanquan’s, the master joined the community in gathering vegetables. From inside the hall, he cried out, “Fire! Fire!”

The entire community rushed at once to the front of the monks’ hall, whereupon the master shut its door. The community had no response.

Nanquan threw away the key, entered the hall through a window, and the master then opened the door. (V) Thank You, Master, for Saving Me

While drawing water from the well tower at Nanquan’s, the master saw Nanquan passing by. He embraced a pillar, suspended his feet, and cried, “Save me! Save me!”

Nanquan climbed the ladder and said, “One, two, three, four, five.”

A little later, the master went to bow in thanks, saying, “Just now, I thank you, Reverend, for saving me.” (VI) Nanquan Cuts the Cat

The eastern and western halls at Nanquan’s were disputing over a cat.

Nanquan came into the hall, lifted up the cat, and said, “If you can speak a word, I will not cut it. If you cannot speak a word, I will cut it.”

The community offered responses, but none accorded with Nanquan's intent. He immediately cut the cat in two.

That evening, when the master returned from outside and was greeting Nanquan, Nanquan brought up the earlier incident and said, "How would you have saved the cat?"

The master then put a sandal on his head and walked out.

Nanquan said, "Had you been there, you could have saved the cat." (VII) I Regret Not Giving Him Two More Stomps

The master asked Nanquan, "I will not ask about difference. What is sameness?"

Nanquan supported himself on the ground with both hands. The master knocked him over with his foot, then returned to the nirvāṇa hall and cried, "Regret! Regret!"

When Nanquan heard this, he sent someone to ask, "What do you regret?"

The master said, "I regret not giving him two more stomps." (VIII) Calling the Water Buffalo to Bathe

As Nanquan passed by the bathhouse, he saw the bath attendant tending the fire and asked, "What are you doing?"

He replied, "Heating water for the bath."

Nanquan said, "Remember this: call the water buffalo to bathe." The bath attendant assented.

That evening, the bath attendant entered the abbot's quarters. Nanquan asked, "What are you doing?"

He replied, "I have come to invite the water buffalo to bathe."

Nanquan said, "Have you brought a rope?"

The bath attendant had no reply.

The master came to greet Nanquan, who related the matter to him. The master said, "I have something to say."

Nanquan immediately said, "Have you brought a rope?"

The master stepped forward and abruptly seized and pulled his nose.

Nanquan said, “That is it, but it is rather rough.” (IX) Beyond the Four Propositions and the Hundred Negations

The master asked Nanquan, “Beyond the four propositions and the hundred negations, please speak, Master.”

Nanquan immediately returned to the abbot’s quarters.

The master said, “That old monk is usually so talkative, yet when questioned, he cannot utter a single word.”

The attendant said, “Do not say that the master had nothing to say.”

The master gave him a slap. (X) Speak, and the Door Will Be Opened

One day Nanquan shut the door to the abbot’s quarters, drew a circle in ashes outside it, and asked the monks, “Speak, and I will open the door.”

Many offered responses, but none accorded with Nanquan’s intent.

The master said, “Heavens! Heavens!”

Nanquan then opened the door. (XI) Where Is the Fault?

The master asked Nanquan, “Mind is not Buddha, and wisdom is not the Way. Is there still any fault?”

Nanquan said, “There is.”

The master said, “Where is the fault? Please speak, Master.”

Nanquan then raised [something], and the master immediately walked out. (XII) The Cypress Tree in the Courtyard

The master ascended the hall and told the assembly, “This matter is utterly clear. Even a person of immeasurable stature cannot get out of here. When this old monk went to Guishan, a monk asked, ‘What is the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?’ Guishan said, ‘Bring me the bed.’ If one is a true master of the school, one must receive people with one’s own proper affair.”

At that time, a monk asked, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?”

The master said, “The cypress tree in the courtyard!”

The student said, “Reverend, do not point to an object to show people.”

The master said, “I do not point to an object to show people.”

He said, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?”

The master said, “The cypress tree in the courtyard.” (XIII) One Must Proceed Among Those of a Different Kind (Instruction)

The master also said, “Ninety years ago, this old monk saw more than eighty accomplished teachers under Great Master Mazu. Every one of them was a true master. They were unlike the teachers of today, who grow branches upon branches of entanglements. For the most part, they are far removed from the sages, and each generation is inferior to the last. Nanquan often said, ‘One must proceed among those of a different kind.’ How are you to understand this? Nowadays, mere youngsters stand at crossroads spinning tangled words, begging for food and seeking prostrations. They gather three or five hundred followers and say, ‘I am a good spiritual friend; you are students.’” (XIV) The Pure Monastic Enclosure

A monk asked, “What is a pure monastic enclosure?”

The master said, “A young girl with her hair in two knots.”

The monk said, “What is a person within the monastic enclosure?”

The master said, “A young girl with her hair in two knots who is pregnant.” (XV) Zhenzhou Radishes

A monk asked, “I have heard that you personally met Nanquan. Is that so?”

The master said, “Zhenzhou produces great big radishes.” (XVI) The Master’s Native Place

A monk asked, “Where is the master’s native place?”

The master pointed with his hand and said, “Farther west of the west.” (XVII) What Is Dharma?

A monk asked, “Dharma has no separate dharma. What is Dharma?”

The master said, “Outer emptiness, inner emptiness, inner and outer emptiness.” (XVIII) What More Is There to Dislike?

A monk asked, “What is the Buddha’s true dharmakāya?”

The master said, “What more is there to dislike?” (XIX) A Model for Past and Present

A monk asked, “What is the Mind-Ground Dharma Gate?”

The master said, “A model for past and present!” (XX) This Old Monk Has No Father-in-Law

A monk asked, “What is the host within the guest?”

The master said, “This mountain monk does not ask about women.”

The monk asked, “What is the guest within the host?”

The master said, “This old monk has no father-in-law.” (XXI) This Old Monk Does Not Avoid the Patriarch

A monk asked, “What is the abiding permanence of all dharmas?”

The master said, “This old monk does not avoid the Patriarch!”

The monk asked again.

The master said, “Today I will not answer questions.” (XXII) No Other Place to Apply the Mind (Instruction)

The master ascended the hall and said, “Brothers, do not stand about for long. If you have something to discuss, discuss it; if not, sit beneath your robes and bowls and investigate principle. When this old monk was traveling from place to place, apart from the two daily meals, those were the only times when I had to occupy my mind with miscellaneous matters. Beyond that, there was no other place to apply the mind. If you do not do this, you are far from truly leaving home.” (XXIII) What Is the Hardest Thing Among All Things?

A monk asked, “What is the hardest thing among all things?”

The master said, “If someone curses you, allow them to move their lips; if someone spits on you, allow them to splash water.” (XXIV) What Is It When There Is No Cessation from Dawn to Night?

A monk asked, “What is it when there is no cessation from dawn to night?”

The master said, “Among monastics there are no such taxpayers subject to two taxes!” (XXV) What Is the One Phrase?

A monk asked, “What is the one phrase?”

The master said, “If you cling to one phrase, it will make you old.” (XXVI) Do Not Leave, Do Not Speak (Instruction)

The master told the assembly, “If throughout your life you do not leave the monastic community and do not speak for ten years or five years, no one will call you a mute. Thereafter, even the Buddha will be unable to do anything with you. If you do not believe it, cut off this old monk’s head.” (XXVII) Do Not Alter the Person You Once Were (Instruction)

The Master ascended the hall and said: “Brothers! You are caught up in the third grievance. Hence it is said: ‘Only change the places where you practiced in the past; do not change the person you were in the past.’ Each of you left home; until now there has been nothing to do. Yet you ask about Chan and ask about the Way. Thirty or twenty of you gather together to ask, as though you owed them Chan and the Way. You call yourselves good spiritual friends, and I share the punishment with you. This old monk does not delight in jesting; I fear burdening the ancients, and so I speak of this and that.” (28) How to Apply the Mind Throughout the Twelve Periods of the Day

A monk asked, “Throughout the twelve periods of the day, how should one apply the mind?”

The Master said, “You are being used by the twelve periods of the day; this old monk uses the twelve periods of the day. Which period are you asking about?” (29) This Barrel-Hooping Fellow

A monk asked, “Who is the true person of Zhaozhou?”

The Master rebuked him, saying, “This barrel-hooping fellow.”

The student responded affirmatively.

The Master said, “Hoop the barrel properly.” (30) The Birds Scatter and the Water Grows Turbid

A monk asked, “What is a student’s proper task?”

The Master said, “When the tree shakes, the birds scatter; when the fish are startled, the water grows turbid.” (31) A Person of Little Spirit

A monk asked, “What is a person of little spirit?”

The Master said, “This old monk is not your equal!”

The student said, “I do not claim victory.”

The Master said, “Why are you lacking in spirit?” (32) Unable to Explain It

A monk asked, “‘The supreme Way is not difficult; it only dislikes choosing and rejecting.’ Is this the den of people nowadays?”

The Master said, “Someone once asked me this, and for a full five years I was unable to explain it.” (33) He Is Indeed Skillful

An official asked, “When Danxia burned a wooden Buddha, why did the superintendent’s eyebrows and beard fall out?”

The Master said, “In an official’s household, who turns raw food into cooked food?”

He said, “The servant.”

The Master said, “He is indeed skillful.” (34) What Do You See?

A monk asked, “When the sage Vimala took Sudhana by the hand and he saw Buddhas in dust motes, what was that like?”

The Master then took the monk by the hand and said, “What do you see?” (35) What Is the Conduct of a Śramaṇa?

A nun asked, “What is the conduct of a śramaṇa?”

The Master said, “Do not bear children!”

The nun said, “Venerable Master, do not involve yourself with me.”

The Master said, “If I involved myself with you, what use would I be?” (36) Servant of the Fields and Granary

A monk asked, “Who is the true person of Zhaozhou?”

The Master said, “A servant of the fields and granary.” (37) Tell Me What This Old Monk Wants

A monk asked, “What is saindhava when the king asks for it?”

The Master said, “Tell me, what does this old monk want?” (38) Mystery Within Mystery

A monk asked, “What is mystery within mystery?”

The Master said, “What do you mean by ‘mystery within mystery’? Seven within seven, eight within eight.” (39) Svāhā in a Quiet Place

A monk asked, “What is saindhava?”

The Master said, “Svāhā in a quiet place.” (40) East, West, South, and North

A monk asked, “What are Dharma and non-Dharma?”

The Master said, “East, west, south, and north.”

The student said, “How should this be understood?”

The Master said, “Above, below, and the four intermediate directions.” (41) This Year He Would Be Seventy-Four or Seventy-Five

A monk asked, “What is mystery within mystery?”

The Master said, “If this monk were still alive, he would be seventy-four or seventy-five this year.” (42) Asking for Saindhava

A monk asked, “What is it like when the king asks for saindhava?”

The Master suddenly rose, bowed, and joined his palms. (43) I Would Not Dare, I Would Not Dare

A monk asked, “What is the Way?”

The Master said, “I would not dare, I would not dare.” (44) Chichi, She She

A monk asked, “What is Dharma?”

The Master said, “Chichi, she she!” (45) Coming and Going Are Not Separated

A monk asked, “How far is Zhaozhou from Zhenzhou?”

The Master said, “Three hundred.”

The student said, “How far is Zhenzhou from Zhaozhou?”

The Master said, “They are not separated.” (46) How Long Has Mystery Been Here?

A monk asked, “What is mystery within mystery?”

The Master said, “How long has mystery been here?”

The student said, “Mystery has been here for a long time!”

The Master said, “Fortunately, you encountered this old monk; otherwise, you would nearly have mystified this fool to death.”

[Jihe means “almost”; lü is used in place of “donkey,” and lüsheng refers to a foolish person.] (47) The Student Himself

A monk asked, “Who is the student himself?”

The Master said, “Do you see the cypress tree in the courtyard?” (48) Do Not Disappoint This Old Monk (Instruction)

The Master ascended the hall and said: “For those who have long engaged in practice, nothing is not real, nothing is not timeless. Those newly admitted to the community must also investigate principle before they can proceed. Do not chase after those with three hundred, five hundred, or a thousand followers, while the two assemblies in the surrounding monasteries praise them as fine abbots. Yet when they are questioned about the Buddhadharma, it is like frying sand to make rice: there is nothing they can do and nothing they can say. Then they say that others are wrong and they themselves are right, their faces flushed red. This is because worldly people utter words contrary to the Dharma. Those who truly wish to understand this meaning must not disappoint this old monk.” (49) How Does the Venerable Master Instruct People?

A monk asked, “To teach the Dharma to all the sages while remaining amid the dust is all mere dressing up. How, then, does the Venerable Master instruct people?”

The Master said, “Where do you see this old monk?”

The student said, “Please, Venerable Master, speak.”

The Master said, “The entire hall of masters and monks does not understand this monk’s words.”

Another monk asked, “Please, Venerable Master, speak.”

The Master said, “You speak; I will listen.” (50) It Is No One Else

A monk asked, “When true transformation leaves no trace and has no teacher, what then of the disciple?”

The Master said, “Who taught you to come and ask?”

The student said, “It is no one else.”

The Master immediately struck him. (51) See for Yourself

A monk asked, “How is this matter to be discerned?”

The Master said, “I find you strange.”

The student said, “How can it be discerned?”

The Master said, “I find it strange that you cannot discern it.”

The student said, “Should one safeguard realization?”

The Master said, “Whether to safeguard realization or not, see for yourself.” (52) A Person Without Conceptual Understanding

A monk asked, “What is a person without conceptual understanding?”

The Master said, “What are you talking about!” (53) This Old Monk Has Not Yet Said Anything

A monk asked, “What was the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?”

The Master stepped down from the Chan seat.

The student said, “Is that not it?”

The Master said, “This old monk has not yet said anything.” (54) Not Even Half a Coin to One’s Share

A monk asked, “The Buddhadharma is long enduring; how should one apply the mind?”

The Master said, “You see how the Former Han and Later Han held sway over the realm; at the time of death, they did not have even half a coin to their share.” (55) Quickly Shut Your Mouth

A monk asked, “People nowadays regard jewels as precious. What do śramaṇas regard as precious?”

The Master said, “Quickly shut your mouth.”

The student said, “Can one still attain it with one’s mouth shut?”

The Master said, “If your mouth is not shut, how can you discern it?” (56) A Single Saying of Zhaozhou

A monk asked, “What is a single saying of Zhaozhou?”

The Master said, “This old monk has not even half a saying.”

The student said, “Is the Venerable Master not here?”

The Master said, “This old monk is not a single saying!” (57) Not Deluded by Any Circumstance

A monk asked, “How can one avoid being deluded by any circumstance?” The Master extended one foot, and the monk removed his shoe. The Master drew back his foot, and the monk had nothing to say. (58) What Buddha Are You Still Seeking?

A lay official asked, “When the Buddha was in the world, all sentient beings took refuge in the Buddha. After the Buddha entered parinirvāṇa, in what do all sentient beings take refuge?”

The Master said, “There are not yet any sentient beings.”

The student said, “I am asking about the present.”

The Master said, “What Buddha are you still seeking!” (59) This Father-Killing Fellow

A monk asked, “Is there anyone who does not repay the four debts and the three realms of existence?”

The Master said, “There is.”

The student said, “Who is that?”

The Master said, “You father-killing fellow, you lacked only this one question.” (60) There Is Nothing to Set Forth

A monk asked, “What is the Venerable Master’s intention?”

The Master said, “There is nothing to set forth.” (61) A Thousand-Weight Crossbow Is Not Triggered for a Shrew

The Master addressed the assembly: “Brothers! Simply reform what is past and cultivate what is to come. If you do not reform, there will be much that will hold you fast! This old monk has been here for more than thirty years, yet not a single Chan master has come here. Even if one does come, he hastily passes through after one night and one meal, going off to seek a place that is soft and warm.”

A monk asked, “If a Chan master should suddenly arrive, what would you say to him?”

The Master said, “A crossbow capable of drawing a thousand catties is not triggered for a field mouse.”

(62) Asking About the Way Has Its Distinctions (Instruction)

The Master said, “Brothers! If someone comes from the south, I unload him. If someone comes from the north, I load him. Therefore it is said: ‘If a person of higher

capacity asks about the Way, he loses the Way; if a person of lower capacity asks about the Way, he gains the Way.'"

"Brothers! When an upright person speaks a deviant dharma, that deviant dharma also becomes upright; when a deviant person speaks the true Dharma, that true Dharma also becomes deviant. In other places, it is hard to see but easy to recognize; here with me, it is easy to see but hard to recognize."

(63) Precisely Within Good and Evil

A monk asked, "Does one who is not deluded by good and evil attain liberation alone or not?"

The Master said, "Not alone."

The student said, "Why not alone?"

The Master said, "Precisely within good and evil."

(64) Heating Until an Iron Bottle Breaks

A nun asked, "Apart from what has been spoken, please instruct me, Reverend."

The Master sharply rebuked her: "Heat an iron bottle until it breaks!"

The nun brought an iron bottle filled with water and said, "Please answer me, Reverend."

The Master laughed at her.

(65) Which Path Does It Fall Into?

A monk asked, "If the world turns into a black pit, on which path does this fall?"

The Master said, "It does not occupy [a path]."

The student said, "What sort of person is it that does not occupy [a path]?"

The Master said, "A slave of the fields and storehouses."

(66) Is It Full or Does It Overflow?

A monk asked, "Only when there are no words and no thoughts does one accord with the phrase. Since there are no words, what is called a phrase?"

The Master said, "High, yet not perilous; full, yet not overflowing."

The student said, “At present, Reverend, are you full, or do you overflow?”

The Master said, “What can I do, since you have asked me?”

(67) Defecating on Clean Ground

A monk asked, “What is the numinous one?”

The Master said, “A pile of shit on clean ground!”

The student said, “Please give me the import of your words, Reverend.”

The Master said, “Do not vex this old monk!”

(68) Is It Still Permissible to Speak?

A monk asked, “The dharmakāya is unconditioned and does not fall into any categories. Is it still permissible to speak of it?”

The Master said, “How would you speak of it?”

The student said, “Then one does not speak of it.”

The Master laughed at him.

(69) Which One Is a Sentient Being?

A monk asked, “What is Buddha, and what is a sentient being?”

The Master said, “Sentient beings are Buddha; Buddha is sentient beings.”

The student said, “Of these two, which one is the sentient being?”

The Master said, “Ask! Ask!”

(70) The Great Way Has No Root

A monk asked, “The great Way has no root. How is it taken up and carried on?”

The Master said, “You take it up and carry it on.”

He said, “Then what about its having no root?”

The Master said, “Since it has no root, what place can bind you?”

(71) One Must Still Cultivate

A monk asked, “Can one who is genuinely cultivating practice avoid being detected by ghosts and spirits?”

The Master said, “They can detect him.”

He said, “Wherein lies the fault?”

The Master said, “The fault lies in seeking.”

He said, “Then does one not cultivate?”

The Master said, “Cultivate.”

(72) Whence Does the Moon Arise?

A monk asked, “A solitary moon hangs in the sky. Whence does its light arise?”

The Master said, “Whence does the moon arise?”

(73) Examination

A monk asked, “I have heard the Reverend say, ‘The Way does not belong to cultivation; simply do not defile it.’ What is not defiling it?”

The Master said, “Examine within and without.”

He said, “Do you also examine yourself?”

The Master said, “Examine.”

He said, “What fault does one oneself have, that one should examine oneself?”

The Master said, “What business is it of yours?”

(74) Buddha Is Affliction; Affliction Is Buddha

The Master addressed the assembly: “This matter is like a bright pearl in the palm of one’s hand: when a barbarian comes, a barbarian appears; when a Han Chinese comes, a Han Chinese appears. This old monk uses a blade of grass as a sixteen-foot golden body, and uses a sixteen-foot golden body as a blade of grass. Buddha is affliction, and affliction is Buddha.”

A monk asked, “For whom is Buddha an affliction?”

The Master said, “For all people, Buddha is an affliction!”

He said, “How may one be free of it?”

The Master said, “Why use freedom?”

(75) Receiving People Through the Fundamental Matter (Instruction)

The Master instructed the assembly: “Here, this old monk receives people through the fundamental matter. If you want this old monk to receive people according to their capacities, there are already the teachings of the three vehicles and twelve divisions to receive them. If they do not understand, whose fault is that? In the future, should you meet a capable man, you may also say that this old monk has not let him down. Whenever anyone asks, receive them through the fundamental matter.”

(76) What Is There to Discuss?

A monk asked, “From ancient times until now, it has been said that mind itself is Buddha. If it is not mind itself, may this student still discuss the matter?”

The Master said, “Set aside ‘mind itself’ for the moment—what is there to discuss?”

(77) The Ancient Mirror Is Not Polished

A monk asked, “If the ancient mirror is not polished, does it still reflect?”

The Master said, “The former life is the cause; this life is the result!”

(78) Dense and Vast

A monk asked, “What is it like before the three cuts fall?”

The Master said, “Dense and dense.”

He said, “What is it like after they fall?”

The Master said, “Vast and vast.”

(79) It Cannot Be Enclosed

A monk asked, “What is a person who has left the three realms?”

The Master said, “He cannot be enclosed.”

(80) Responding to the World, Not Responding to the World

A monk asked, “Before Niutou Farong met the Fourth Patriarch, a hundred birds brought flowers as offerings. After he met him, why did the birds no longer bring

flowers as offerings?”

The Master said, “Responding to the world; not responding to the world.”

(81) How Much Better That the Spring Breeze Is Idle Everywhere

A monk asked, “What is it like when white clouds are at ease?”

The Master said, “How much better that the spring breeze is idle everywhere!”

(82) Neither Ancient nor Modern Can Chew It

A monk asked, “What is the white ox in the open?”

The Master said, “Under the moon, no color is needed.”

He said, “What does it eat?”

The Master said, “Neither ancient nor modern can chew it.”

He said, “Please answer me, Master.”

The Master said, “This old monk has answered you thus!”

(83) To Conceive It in Mind Is Already to Go Astray

The Master instructed the assembly: “To conceive it in mind is already to go astray.”

A monk then asked, “What about when one does not conceive it in mind?”

The Master struck him three times and said, “Has this old monk failed you, Venerable?”

(84) Do Not Dispute Right and Wrong Here

A monk asked, “Whenever there is a question and answer, it falls within the mind faculty. If it does not fall within the mind faculty, how does the Master respond?”

The Master said, “Ask.”

The student said, “Then please speak, Master.”

The Master said, “Do not dispute right and wrong here!”

(85) What Will You Offer?

A monk asked, “When the dragon girl personally made an offering to the Buddha, what did she offer?”

The Master made an offering gesture with both hands.

(86) You Have Already Slandered It

The Master instructed the assembly: “Here, in the Buddhadharma, to call it difficult is easy, and to call it easy is difficult. Elsewhere, it is hard to see but easy to recognize; here with this old monk, it is easy to see but hard to recognize. If you can understand this, you may stride across the world. Suppose someone suddenly asks, ‘Where do you come from?’ If you tell him, ‘I come from Zhaozhou,’ you have already slandered Zhaozhou. If you say, ‘I do not come from Zhaozhou,’ you have buried yourself. All of you, how would you answer him?”

A monk asked, “If whatever meets the eye is slander, how does the Reverend avoid slander?”

The Master said, “If you say it is not slander, you have already slandered it!”

(87) The Path of Genuine Cultivation

A monk asked, “What is the path of genuine cultivation?”

The Master said, “Understand cultivation, and that is enough. If you do not understand cultivation, you will fall unevenly into the karma of others.”

(88) I Will Teach You What Dharma Zhaozhou Teaches

The Master said, “I will teach you: whenever someone asks, simply tell him, ‘I come from Zhaozhou.’ If he suddenly asks, ‘What Dharma does Zhaozhou teach?’ simply tell him, ‘When it is cold, I say it is cold; when it is hot, I say it is hot.’ If he further asks, ‘I am not asking about that,’ simply say, ‘What are you asking about?’ If he asks again, ‘What Dharma does Zhaozhou teach?’ then tell him, ‘When the Reverend came, he did not entrust me with any message. If you want to know about Zhaozhou, go ask him yourself.’”

[Yi: a third-person pronoun, equivalent to “she,” “he,” or “that person.”]

(89) Without Regard for Before or After

A monk asked, “What is it like when there is no regard for before or after?”

The Master said, “Set aside concern for before and after for the moment: whom are you asking?” (90) Even marrow is not established—do not slander the Second

Patriarch

The Master addressed the assembly: “Kāśyapa transmitted it to Ānanda. Tell me, to whom did Bodhidharma transmit it?”

A monk asked, “The Second Patriarch obtained the marrow—what then?”

The Master said, “Do not slander the Second Patriarch!”

The Master further said, “Bodhidharma also said: ‘Those on the outside obtained the skin; those on the inside obtained the bone.’ Tell me, what did those still further inside obtain?”

A monk asked, “What is the principle of obtaining the marrow?”

The Master said, “Just recognize the skin. Here, this old monk does not even establish marrow!”

The monk said, “What is marrow?”

The Master said, “In that case, you have not even touched the skin!” (91) Who is the other one?

A monk asked, “Standing so majestically—is this not the Master’s proper position?”

The Master said, “Do you know that there is one who refuses?”

The monk said, “Then there is another position?”

The Master said, “Who is the other one?”

The monk said, “Who is not the other one?”

The Master said, “Call out as you please.” (92) Is mental activity unavoidable?

A monk asked, “A person of the highest capacity turns at a single prompting. What about when one of the lowest capacity comes?”

The Master said, “Are you of the highest capacity or the lowest?”

The monk said, “I ask the Master to answer.”

The Master said, “The words have not yet found their master.”

The monk said, “I have come seven thousand li; do not make this a matter of mental activity.”

The Master said, “Judging by your very question, is mental activity not unavoidable?”

That monk left after staying one night. (93) One who does not continue the collateral line

A monk asked, “What about one who does not continue the collateral line?”

The Master said, “Who?”

The monk said, “Huiyan.”

The Master said, “What do you ask?”

The monk said, “One who does not continue the collateral line.”

The Master stroked him with his hand.

[Shao: to continue; to inherit] (94) Do Not Deceive Yourself

A monk asked, “What is the matter beneath the patched robe?”

The Master said, “Do not deceive yourself.” (95) What is true speech?

A monk asked, “Suchness, ordinary beings, and sages are all dream-words. What is true speech?”

The Master said, “I do not speak of those two either.”

The monk said, “Set those two aside for the moment. What is true speech?”

The Master said, “Oṃ bu-lin fa.” (96) What is Zhaozhou?

A monk asked, “What is Zhaozhou?”

The Master said, “East Gate, West Gate, South Gate, North Gate.” (97) What is samādhi?

A monk asked, “What is samādhi?”

The Master said, “Not fixed.”

The monk said, “Why is it not fixed?”

The Master said, “A living thing, a living thing.” (98) Not following any existence

A monk asked, “What is it like when one does not follow any existence?”

The Master said, “It should be just so.”

The monk said, “Is this not the student’s fundamental task?”

The Master said, “Following, following.” (99) I ask the Master to shoot the whole arrow

A monk asked, “An ancient spent thirty years with one bow and two arrows, and only shot half a sage. Today I ask the Master to shoot the whole arrow!”

The Master immediately rose and left. (100) Not within clarity

The Master addressed the assembly: “The supreme Way is not difficult; it only rejects picking and choosing. As soon as there are words, there is picking and choosing. This old monk, however, is not within clarity. From what place do you see the Patriarch?”

A monk asked, “Since the Master is not within clarity, what place does he safeguard?”

The Master said, “I too do not know.”

The monk said, “Since the Master himself does not know, why do you say that you are not within clarity?”

The Master said, “It is all right to ask about the matter. Make your bows and withdraw.” (101) Dharmas originally do not arise; now they do not cease

The Master addressed the assembly: “Dharmas originally do not arise; now they do not cease. Do not say further that words are arising and silence is ceasing. All of you, what is the principle of neither arising nor ceasing?”

A monk asked, “Is this already neither arising nor ceasing?”

The Master said, “This fellow recognizes only dead words.”

[Zao: The Gǔ Zūnsù Yǔyào has "cao" instead.] (102) The Supreme Way Is Not Difficult; It Only Rejects Picking and Choosing

A monk asked, “The supreme Way is not difficult; it only rejects picking and choosing. As soon as there are words, there is picking and choosing. How does the Master instruct people?”

The Master said, “Why not quote the ancient’s words in full?”

The monk said, “I only said as much as I had reached.”

The Master said, “Just this: ‘The supreme Way is not difficult; it only rejects picking and choosing.’” (103) If it is not genuine, how can one escape birth and death?

The Master ascended the hall and addressed the assembly: “Reading sūtras is also within birth and death; not reading sūtras is also within birth and death. All of you,

how can you get out?”

A monk then asked, “When neither is retained, what then?”

The Master said, “If it is genuine, that will do. If it is not genuine, how can you escape birth and death?” (104) What is it like when the edge of a sharp sword is swift?

A monk asked, “What is it like when the edge of a sharp sword is swift?”

The Master said, “This old monk is a sharp sword. Wherein lies its swiftness?” (105) When great calamity arrives, how can it be avoided?

A monk asked, “When great calamity arrives, how can it be avoided?”

The Master said, “Just right.” (106) It is very hard to find a person

The Master ascended the hall and, after a long pause, said, “Has the whole assembly arrived?”

Someone replied, “The whole assembly has arrived.”

The Master said, “Wait for one more person to come, and then I will speak.”

A monk said, “When no one comes, then tell it to the Master.”

The Master said, “It is very hard to find a person.” (107) What is it like at the time of neither arising nor ceasing?

The Master addressed the assembly: “When mind arises, the various dharmas arise; when mind ceases, the various dharmas cease. What do you all say?”

A monk then asked, “What is it like at the time of neither arising nor ceasing?”

The Master said, “I allow you that question.” (108) I can use the three phrases

While receiving a visitor, the Master said, “It is neither fully dark nor yet dawn; at which end are you?”

The monk said, “I am not at either end.”

The Master said, “Then are you in the middle?”

The monk said, “If I were in the middle, I would be at the two ends.”

The Master said, “For how long has this monk been here with this old monk, speaking such words? He cannot get beyond the three phrases. Yet even if he could get beyond them, he would still be within the three phrases. What do you say?”

The monk said, “I can use the three phrases.”

The Master said, “Why did you not say so earlier?” (109) What is mastery in all directions?

A monk asked, “What is mastery in all directions?”

The Master said, “Leave behind Vajra Chan.” (110) Not your realm

The Master addressed the assembly: “A Chan monk must directly sit above and cut off the heads of the sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya Buddhas before it will do.”

A monk asked, “Who is the one who sits above and cuts off the heads of the sambhogakāya and nirmāṇakāya Buddhas?”

The Master said, “It is not your realm.” (111) Is there no expedient means?

The Master addressed the assembly: “The great Way is right before one’s eyes, yet it is difficult to behold.”

A monk then asked, “What form is there before one’s eyes that enables a student to behold it?”

The Master said, “You may be south of the Yangtze or north of the Yangtze.”

The monk said, “Does the Master have no expedient means for people?”

The Master said, “What did you just ask?” (112) Who enters the dharma realm?

A monk asked, “Upon entering the dharma realm, is there knowing or not?”

The Master said, “Who enters the dharma realm?”

The monk said, “Then, upon entering the dharma realm, does one go without knowing?”

The Master said, “It is not cold ashes or a dead tree; flowers and brocade appear, manifesting a hundred kinds of existence.”

The monk said, “Is this the functioning at the point of entering the dharma realm?”

The Master said, “What has that to do with it?” (113) Please expound it once more

A monk asked, “If it is the ground of ultimate reality, from what place can it be attained?”

The Master said, “I ask the venerable one to expound it once more.” (114) What is one who cannot be deluded?

A monk asked, “When all the myriad realms arise, is there one who cannot be deluded?”

The Master said, “There is.”

The monk said, “What is one who cannot be deluded?”

The Master said, “Do you still believe that there is Buddha-Dharma?”

The monk said, “I believe there is Buddha-Dharma; the ancients have already said that. What is one who cannot be deluded?”

The Master said, “Why do you not ask this old monk?”

The student said, “I have asked.”

The Master said, “You are deluded.” (115) The Dharmakāya Does Not Teach the Dharma

A monk asked, “Are the people of old and the people of today still close to one another or not?”

The Master said, “They are close, yet they are not of one body.”

The student said, “Why are they not the same?”

The Master said, “The dharmakāya does not teach the Dharma.”

The student said, “If the dharmakāya does not teach the Dharma, does the Master guide people or not?”

The Master said, “I am answering you right here!”

The student said, “Then why say that the dharmakāya does not teach the Dharma?”

The Master said, “I saved your father right here, yet he never showed himself.” (116) Do You Still Submit to Being Assessed?

A monk asked, “When the student does not meet [the Master], is there still mutual correspondence or not?”

The Master said, “Mutual correspondence can be assessed.”

The student said, “If it cannot be assessed, what mutual correspondence is there?”

The Master said, “If it is not so, then it is you yourself.”

The student said, “Does the Master still submit to being assessed or not?”

The Master said, “The closer a person turns, the farther the Way turns.”

The student said, “Why does the Master hide himself away?”

The Master said, “I am now speaking with you in plain sight.”

The student said, “Then why say that it does not turn?”

The Master said, “It must be so.” (117) To Know One’s Own Faults Is Enough

The Master addressed the assembly: “Those who can be taught are a matter of this lifetime. Those who cannot be taught become a grievance in the third lifetime. If one does not teach them, one fears abandoning all sentient beings; yet teaching them, too, is a grievance. Would you still teach them or not?”

A monk said, “I would teach them.”

The Master said, “Do all sentient beings still see you or not?”

The student said, “They do not see me.”

The Master said, “Why do they not see you?”

The student said, “Because there are no appearances.”

The Master said, “Do you now see this old monk or not?”

The student said, “The Master is not a sentient being.”

The Master said, “To know one’s own faults is enough.” (118) All Are Matters of Spontaneity

The Master addressed the assembly: “The Dragon Girl offers it from the heart; all are matters of spontaneity.”

A monk asked, “If it is spontaneous, why make an offering?”

The Master said, “If she did not make an offering, how would one know it was spontaneous?” (119) It Is Hard to Find Even One Person of the Way

The Master addressed the assembly: “Among eight hundred fellows making Buddhas, it is hard to find even one person of the Way.” (120) Then You Do Not Practice

A monk asked, “In a place where there is neither Buddha nor human being, is there still practice or not?”

The Master said, “Apart from those two, there are hundreds of thousands of millions.”

The student said, “When a person of the Way comes, where is he?”

The Master said, “Then you do not practice.”

The monk bowed.

The Master said, “There are many places for you to settle into.” (121) Where Are the White Clouds?

A monk asked, “What about when the white clouds do not descend?”

The Master said, “This old monk does not know how to mount an elephant.”

The student said, “Is there no host and guest?”

The Master said, “This old monk is the host, and you, Ācārya, are the guest. Where are the white clouds?” (122) Losing the Timber for a Ridgepole

A monk asked, “What about when great skill seems clumsy?”

The Master said, “You have lost the timber for a ridgepole.” (123) Answering You Is the Purport

The Master addressed the assembly: “I do not like even to hear the word ‘Buddha.’”

A monk asked, “Does the Master still guide people or not?”

The Master said, “I guide people.”

The student said, “How do you guide people?”

The Master said, “Without knowing the profound purport, one vainly labors at quiet contemplation.”

The student said, “Since it is profound, what is its purport?”

The Master said, “I do not hold to the root.”

The student said, “This is what is profound; what is the purport?”

The Master said, “Answering you is the purport.” (124) For Your Wandering Soul

The Master addressed the assembly: “Each has his own Chan; each has his own Way. If someone suddenly asks you, ‘What is Chan? What is the Way?’ how would you answer him?”

A monk then asked, “Since each has his own Chan and Way, why have there been teachings and dialogues from ancient times until now?”

The Master said, “For your wandering soul.”

The student said, “I have not yet understood how you guide people.”

The Master withdrew and said nothing. (125) Who Is It That Recites?

The Master addressed the assembly: “Do not let your time pass idly. Recite the Buddha; recite the Dharma.”

A monk then asked, “What is it for this student himself to recite?”

The Master said, “Who is it that recites?”

The student said, “There is no companion.”

The Master rebuked him: “You donkey!” (126) Take the Patriarchs and Buddhas as Your Teachers

Ascending the hall, the Master addressed the assembly: “If it is the first phrase, take the patriarchs and Buddhas as your teachers. If it is the second phrase, take humans and devas as your teachers. If it is the third phrase, you save yourself, with no remedy available.”

A monk asked, “What is the first phrase?”

The Master said, “Take the patriarchs and Buddhas as your teachers.”

The Master added, “Very good—begin again from the start.”

The student asked again.

The Master said, “You have gone back again to humans and devas.” (127) What Will You Use to Answer?

The Master addressed the assembly: “It is not that he does not bring it forth, nor is it that this old monk does not answer.”

A monk said, “What does the Master use to answer?”

The Master gave a long sigh.

The monk said, “If the Master answers with this, would that not disappoint the student?”

The Master said, “If you had just approved of me, I would have disappointed you. If you do not approve of me, I do not disappoint you.” (128) Only an Unbaked Brick

The Master addressed the assembly: “This old monk will answer questions tonight. Let those who can ask come forth!”

As soon as a monk came forward and bowed,

the Master said, “Until now I have cast out a brick to attract jade, but have received only an unbaked brick.”

[Ji (jī): an unbaked brick] (129) Does a Dog Have Buddha-Nature?

A monk asked, “Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?”

The Master said, “No.”

The student said, “From all Buddhas above down to ants below, all have Buddha-nature. Why does a dog not have it?”

The Master said, “Because it has the nature of karmic consciousness.” (130) Attend Only to the Manifestation Body

A monk asked, “What is the dharmakāya?”

The Master said, “The manifestation body.”

The monk said, “This student is not asking about the manifestation body.”

The Master said, “You need only attend to the manifestation body.” (131) What About When the Bright Moon Hangs in the Sky?

A monk asked, “What about when the bright moon hangs in the sky?”

The Master said, “What is your name, Ācārya?”

The student said, “This one is so-and-so.”

The Master said, “Where is the bright moon hanging in the sky?” (132) It Cannot Be Found

A monk asked, “What about precisely at the time of two eights?”

The Master said, “East, east; west, west.”

The student said, “What are ‘east, east; west, west’?”

The Master said, “They cannot be found.” (133) I Understand Even Less

A monk asked, “What about when this student understands nothing at all?”

The Master said, “I understand even less.”

The monk said, “Does the Master know that there is [such a thing] or not?”

The Master said, “I am not a piece of wood. How could I not know?”

The monk said, “Excellent—not understanding.”

The Master clapped his hands and laughed. (134) What Is a Person of the Way?

A monk asked, “What is a person of the Way?”

The Master said, “I call him a Buddha-person.” (135) After Eating, Have You Had Tea Yet?

A monk asked, “Whenever there are words and phrases, raising a hand or moving a foot, they all fall into this student’s net. Apart from these, please speak, Master!”

The Master said, “This old monk has eaten but has not yet had tea.” (136) Do You Still Practice?

Magistrate Ma asked, “Does the Master still practice or not?”

The Master said, “If this old monk were to practice, it would be a calamity.”

The magistrate said, “Since the Master does not practice, whom do you teach to practice?”

The Master said, “The magistrate is one who practices!”

The magistrate said, “How can this one be called a practitioner?”

The Master said, “If you do not cultivate, how could you end up fallen into the position of a human king? You would be fed until you were red, frozen, and bare, with no time of release.”

The official then shed tears, bowed, and gave thanks. (137) It Is Not That I Do Not Respond

The Master instructed the assembly: “It is not that the ācārya does not bring it forth; it is not that this old monk does not respond.”

He also said, “Ācārya, do not raise your fist or join your palms. This old monk will not answer with a meditation bench or whisk.” (138) Where Thought Cannot Reach

A monk asked, “What is the place that thought cannot reach?”

The Master said, “Come over here.”

The monk said, “Coming over here is a place thought can reach. What is the place thought cannot reach?”

The Master raised his hand and said, “What do you call this?”

The monk said, “I call it a hand. What does the Reverend call it?”

The Master said, “I too can give it a hundred names.”

The monk said, “Setting aside the Reverend’s hundred names, what do you call it?”

The Master said, “That is precisely the place your thought cannot reach.”

The monk bowed.

The Master said, “I shall teach you what your thought can reach.”

The monk said, “What is that?”

The Master said, “Śākyamuni’s teaching and the patriarchs’ teaching—these are your teachers!”

The monk said, “The patriarchs and Buddhas of old have already spoken of that. What is the place thought cannot reach?”

The Master again raised his finger and said, “What do you call this?”

The monk was silent for a long while.

The Master said, “Why not say it directly? What further doubt is there?” (139) The Master’s Family Style

A monk asked, “What is the Master’s family style?”

The Master said, “This old monk is hard of hearing. Ask loudly!”

The monk asked again. The Master said, “You ask about my family style, but I recognize yours.” (140) The Myriad Objects All Arise

A monk asked, “What is it like when the myriad objects all arise?”

The Master said, “The myriad objects all arise.”

The monk said, “One question and one answer are arising. What is non-arising?”

The Master said, “The meditation bench does not arise.”

Just as the monk was about to bow, the Master said, “Do you remember the question and answer?”

The monk said, “I remember.”

The Master said, “Try repeating them.”

The monk was about to repeat them. (141) Both Mind and No-Mind Have Been Chosen by You

A monk asked, “What is the Buddha before me?”

The Master said, “The one in the hall.”

The monk said, “That is a Buddha in physical form. What is Buddha?”

The Master said, “Mind itself is.”

The monk said, “Mind itself is still limited. What is Buddha?”

The Master said, “No-mind is.”

The monk said, “May this student choose between mind and no-mind?”

The Master said, “Both mind and no-mind have been chosen by you already. What more can you have this old monk say?” (142) This Old Monk Has Hooked One

A monk asked, “Having come from afar to seek a teacher, I ask: what is your family style?”

The Master said, “I do not tell it to people.”

The monk said, “Why do you not tell it to people?”

The Master said, “That is my family style.”

The monk said, “Since the Reverend does not tell it to people, why do people from the four seas come to you?”

The Master said, “You are the sea; I am not the sea.”

The monk said, “What are the affairs within the sea?”

The Master said, “This old monk has hooked one.” (143) I Have Not Yet Gone Along with You

A monk asked, “What kind of person can neither patriarchs nor Buddhas approach?”

The Master said, “Not a patriarch or a Buddha.”

The monk said, “Yet why can they not approach?”

The Master said, “I tell you: it is not a patriarch, not a Buddha, not a sentient being, and not a thing. Do you understand?”

The monk said, “What is it?”

The Master said, “If it has a name, then it is a patriarch, a Buddha, or a sentient being.”

The monk said, “It cannot simply be left at that!”

The Master said, “I have not yet gone along with you.” (144) Foxes, Wolves, and Jackals

A monk asked, “What is ordinary mind?”

The Master said, “Foxes, wolves, and jackals.” (145) What Have You Heard?

A monk asked, “What expedient means will enable one to hear what has not been heard?”

The Master said, “Set aside what has not been heard for now. What have you ever heard?” (146) Just Follow the Colors

A monk asked, “I have received the teaching that the maṇi jewel follows the colors. What is its original color?”

The Master called the monk by name, and the monk answered.

The Master said, “Come over here!”

The monk came over and again asked, “What is its original color?”

The Master said, “Just follow the colors.” (147) A Fine Ordinary Mind

A monk asked, “Does a person of ordinary mind still receive instruction?”

The Master said, “I do not pass through his doorway.”

The monk said, “Then would you not leave those people on that side to sink?”

The Master said, “A fine ordinary mind.” (148) Impossible to Pick Out

A monk asked, “What is the thing that this student should safeguard?”

The Master said, “Even to the end of future time, you will not be able to pick it out.” (149) The Temple Administrator

A monk asked, “What is a person of great cultivation?”

The Master said, “The temple administrator.” (150) Fine Not-Knowing

A monk asked, “This student has only just arrived and knows nothing at all of the affairs at the entrance. What should he do?”

The Master said, “What is your name, Reverend?”

The monk said, “Huinan.”

The Master said, “Fine not-knowing.” (151) How Can One Avoid Slandering?

A monk asked, “This student wishes to learn, yet slanders the Reverend. How can he avoid slandering?”

The Master said, “What is your name?”

The monk said, “Daojiao.”

The Master said, “Go stay in a quiet place, you rice-bin!” (152) If There Is the Slightest Trace, Ten Thousand Kalpas Are Not Enough

A monk asked, “What is the Master’s great intent?”

The Master said, “Neither great nor small.”

The monk said, “Could this be the Master’s great intent?”

The Master said, “If there is the slightest trace, ten thousand kalpas are not enough.” (153) To Come Forth Is to Die

A monk asked, “‘The myriad dharmas are fundamentally at rest, but people themselves create disturbance.’ Whose words are these?”

The Master said, “To come forth is to die.” (154) I Alone Am Honored

A monk asked, “‘Not Buddha, not a thing, not a sentient being’—this is a statement of negation. What is a statement that does not negate?”

The Master said, “Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am honored.” (155) May You Long Behold Vairocana’s Perfect Form

A monk asked, “What is Vairocana’s perfect form?”

The Master said, “This old monk left home in his youth and has never suffered from blurred vision.”

The monk said, “Does the Reverend still teach people?”

The Master said, “May you long behold Vairocana’s perfect form.” (156) What Is Transmitted?

A monk asked, “When Buddhas and patriarchs were alive, Buddhas and patriarchs transmitted it. After Buddhas and patriarchs have passed away, who transmits it?”

The Master said, “Past and present alike all fall within this old monk’s domain!”

The monk said, “What is transmitted?”

The Master said, “Every one of them belongs to birth and death!”

The monk said, “You must not bury the patriarchs in obscurity!”

The Master said, “What is transmitted?” (157) May You Become a Great Worthy

A monk asked, “What is it like when both ordinary beings and sages are exhausted?”

The Master said, “May you become a great worthy. This old monk is one who obstructs Buddhas and patriarchs.” (158) This Old Monk’s Fault

A monk asked, “Having heard from afar of Zhaozhou, why is it that, upon arriving, I do not see him?”

The Master said, “This old monk’s fault.” (159) If You Do Not Rely, You May Go East or West as You Please

A monk asked, “The bright moon hangs in the sky. What are the affairs within the room?”

The Master said, “Since leaving home, this old monk has never made a living.”

The monk said, “Then the Reverend does not act for the present age.”

The Master said, “One cannot cure one’s own illness; how could one cure the illnesses of others?”

The monk said, “But what if this student has nothing on which to rely?”

The Master said, “If you rely, your feet tread the ground; if you do not rely, you may go east or west as you please.” (160) There Are Not Two

A monk asked, “What is it like when mind is within mind and cannot be fathomed?”

The Master said, “Whom are you trying to fathom?”

The student said, “Examine yourself.”

The Master said, “There are not two.” (161) It is excellent not to see any outer boundary.

Someone asked, “What is it like when no outer boundary is seen?”

The Master pointed to a clean-water vase and said, “What is this?”

The student said, “A clean-water vase.”

The Master said, “It is excellent not to see any outer boundary.” (162) The slightest conception is already off.

Someone asked, “What is returning to the root?”

The Master said, “The slightest conception is already off.” (163) Beyond words and phrases is solitary liberation.

Someone asked, “Without leaving words and phrases, how can one attain solitary liberation?”

The Master said, “Beyond words and phrases is solitary liberation.”

The student said, “Just now, no one told this person to come.”

The Master said, “What brought you here?”

The student said, “Why does the Reverend not sort it out?”

The Master said, “I sorted it out long ago.” (164) This old monk follows behind you.

Someone asked, “Neither mind nor wisdom—please give me one phrase.”

The Master said, “This old monk follows behind you.” (165) What is ultimate?

Someone asked, “What is ultimate?”

The Master said, “Ultimate.”

The student said, “Which one is ultimate?”

The Master said, “This old monk is ultimate. You do not understand the questioner’s words.”

The student said, “It is not that I did not ask.”

The Master said, “Where is the ultimate?” (166) Not a thread hangs.

Someone asked, “What is it like when not a thread hangs?”

The Master said, “What does not hang?”

The student said, “Not a thread hangs.”

The Master said, “Excellent—not a thread hangs.” (167) Do not occupy another’s rank.

Someone asked, “What about one who is like a person rescuing his head from fire?”

The Master said, “Then study.”

The student said, “Where?”

The Master said, “Do not occupy another’s rank.” (168) This old monk sits right here.

Someone asked, “In the empty kalpa, who is the master?”

The Master said, “This old monk sits right here.”

The student said, “What Dharma does he teach?”

The Master said, “He teaches what you have asked!” (169) Empty luminosity illumines itself.

Someone asked, “I have heard the ancients say, ‘Empty luminosity illumines itself.’ What is self-illumination?”

The Master said, “Do not call it illuminating another.”

The student said, “What about where illumination does not reach?”

The Master said, “You have fallen into words.” (170) When not a single thought has yet arisen.

Someone asked, “What is it?”

The Master said, “When not a single thought has yet arisen.” (171) What is the Dharma King?

Someone asked, “What is the Dharma King?”

The Master said, “The great king in the prefecture is.”

He said, “Is the Reverend not one?”

The Master said, “Are you planning a rebellion? You refuse to acknowledge even one king.” (172) You teach and transform me, and let me see.

Someone asked, “What is the Buddha-mind?”

The Master said, “You are mind; I am Buddha. Whether you honor me or not, see for yourself!”

The student said, “The Master is certainly not absent; can one still honor him?”

The Master said, “You teach and transform me, and let me see.” (173) Not one may be lacking.

Someone asked, “Among the three bodies, which is the original body?”

The Master said, “Not one may be lacking.” (174) It is in your ear.

Someone asked, “May I ask who is the patriarch in this land?”

The Master said, “Since Bodhidharma came, all on this side are.”

The student said, “Which patriarch are you?”

The Master said, “I do not fall into ranks.”

The student said, “Where is it?”

The Master said, “It is in your ear.” (175) For now, sit at home.

Someone asked, “Without abandoning the root or pursuing the branches, what is the true path?”

The Master said, “A fine monastic indeed.”

The student said, “This student has never left home.”

The Master said, “Take refuge in the Buddha; take refuge in the Dharma.”

The student said, “May I ask whether there is a home to leave?”

The Master said, “You must simply leave home.”

The student said, “Where should I place it?”

The Master said, “For now, sit at home.” (176) If you exert effort, you go astray.

Someone asked, “When a person of clear vision sees everything, do they also see forms?”

The Master said, “Strike it away.”

The student said, “How can it be struck away?”

The Master said, “Do not exert effort.”

The student said, “Without exerting effort, how can it be struck away?”

The Master said, “If you exert effort, you go astray.” (177) Yet this old monk cannot be done without.

Someone asked, “For whom is the fundamental intent of the patriarchs and Buddhas?”

The Master said, “Only for the present time.”

The student said, “But what if one cannot attain it?”

The Master said, “Whose fault is that?”

The student said, “How should one undertake it?”

The Master said, “Nowadays, no one can undertake it!”

The student said, “Then there is nothing to rely on?”

The Master said, “Yet this old monk cannot be done without.” (178) Practice uprightly and greatly.

Someone asked, “What about one who has settled the matter?”

The Master said, “Practice uprightly and greatly.”

The student said, “May I ask whether the Reverend still practices?”

The Master said, “Putting on clothes and eating meals.”

The student said, “Putting on clothes and eating meals are ordinary matters. May I ask whether that is practice?”

The Master said, “Just tell me: what do I do every day?” (179) Who teaches and transforms you?

Director Cui asked, “Does a great spiritual friend also enter hell?”

The Master said, “This old monk is the last to enter!”

Cui said, “Since you are a great spiritual friend, why do you enter hell?”

The Master said, “If this old monk did not enter, how could I meet you, Director?” (180) Heaven and earth are far apart.

Someone asked, “What if there is the slightest discrepancy?”

The Master said, “Heaven and earth are far apart.”

He said, “What if there is not the slightest discrepancy?”

The Master said, “Heaven and earth are far apart.” (181) The sleeping eye and the unsleeping eye.

Someone asked, “What is the unsleeping eye?”

The Master said, “The ordinary eye, the fleshly eye.”

He further said, “Though one has not attained the heavenly eye, the power of the fleshly eye is thus.”

The student said, “What is the sleeping eye?”

The Master said, “The Buddha-eye and the Dharma-eye are the sleeping eyes.” (182) Then it cannot be lifted.

Someone asked, “At the summit of Dayu Ridge, one caught up with it; why then could it not be lifted?”

The Master lifted his patched robe and said, “Where did you get this?”

The student said, “I am not asking about this.”

The Master said, “Then it cannot be lifted.” (183) Neither joined nor dispersed.

Someone asked, “How does one distinguish neither joining nor dispersing?”

The Master said, “You have one; I have one.”

He said, “This is joining. What is dispersing?”

The Master said, “You are precisely joined.” (184) Do not take the wrong road.

Someone asked, “What is not taking the wrong road?”

The Master said, “Knowing the mind and seeing one’s true nature is not taking the wrong road.” (185) What do you call a pearl?

Someone asked, “When a bright pearl is in the palm, does it still shine?”

The Master said, “Its shining is not absent, but what do you call a pearl?” (186) Excellent—without roots.

Someone asked, “What is it like when the numinous seedling has no roots?”

The Master said, “Where have you come from?”

He said, “I have come from Taiyuan.”

The Master said, “Excellent—without roots.” (187) Go and become a Buddha.

Someone asked, “What about when this student intends to become a Buddha?”

The Master said, “That is exceedingly laborious.”

He said, “What if no effort is expended?”

The Master said, “Then go and become a Buddha.” (188) Where does one make one rise and one fall?

A monk asked, “The student is dull and confused, adrift in the rise and fall of floating and sinking. How can he get out?”

The Master merely sat there.

The monk said, “I am sincerely asking you, Reverend.”

The Master said, “Where do you make a floating and a sinking?” (189) Why not say, “Today the wind is fine”

A monk asked, “Neither among ordinary beings nor among sages—how can one avoid the two-sided path?”

The Master said, “Get rid of the two sides, then come answer me.”

The monk did not understand.

The Master said, “Where does not understanding begin? Here, it begins with this old monk; when you are in the marketplace, where does it begin?”

The monk said, “Why are you, Reverend, not settled?”

The Master said, “I am teaching you. Why not say, ‘Today the wind is fine’?” (190) It is hard to find an icchantika

A monk asked, “What kind of person is a great icchantika?”

The Master said, “Will you believe me if this old monk answers you?”

The monk said, “Your words carry weight, Reverend. How could I dare not believe them?”

The Master said, “It is hard to find an icchantika.”

[Icchantika: a person of such capacity that he can never attain Buddhahood.] (191) There is no place for it here

A monk asked, “Where can a person utterly without shame abide?”

The Master said, “There is no place for it here.”

The monk said, “If he suddenly pokes his head out, where should he go?”

The Master said, “Take him away.” (192) Functioning is not absent—but who is manifest?

A monk asked, “What is it like when functioning does not manifest?”

The Master said, “Functioning is not absent—but who is manifest?” (193) What do you call the empty kalpa?

A monk asked, “In the empty kalpa, is there anyone who practices or not?”

The Master said, “What do you call the empty kalpa?”

The monk said, “Not a single thing exists.”

The Master said, “Only this can be called practice. What do you call the empty kalpa?” (194) Do not tread on lofty fame; do not seek defiled gain

A monk asked, “What is leaving home?”

The Master said, “Do not tread on lofty fame; do not seek defiled gain.”

[Huai: The Jingde Record of the Transmission of the Lamp has "de" instead.]

(195) This old monk does not speak the Maoshan Dharma

A monk asked, “Without pointing to any one dharma, what is the Reverend’s Dharma?”

The Master said, “This old monk does not speak the Maoshan Dharma.”

The monk said, “Since you do not speak the Maoshan Dharma, what is the Reverend’s Dharma?”

The Master said, “I have told you that I do not speak the Maoshan Dharma.”

The monk said, “Could this perhaps be it?”

The Master said, “This old monk has never shown this to anyone.”

[Maoshan: that is, Mount Mao.] (196) Thus, it is a thousand miles, ten thousand miles away

A monk asked, “What is the one road of solitary liberation before one’s very eyes?”

The Master said, “Neither two nor three.”

The monk said, “There is a road before my eyes. May this student proceed forward upon it?”

The Master said, “Thus, it is a thousand miles, ten thousand miles away.” (197) What lies beyond Vairocana

A monk asked, “What lies beyond Vairocana?”

The Master said, “This old monk is beneath your feet.”

The monk said, “Why are you, Reverend, beneath this student’s feet?”

The Master said, “You never knew that there was something beyond.” (198) What is fitting?

A monk asked, “What is fitting?”

The Master said, “It is you who are not fitting.”

The monk said, “What is not fitting?”

The Master said, “Discern it in the preceding statement.” (199) My Dharma is wondrous and difficult to conceive

A monk asked, “What is the Reverend’s true intent?”

The Master said, “Stop! Stop! There is no need to speak. My Dharma is wondrous and difficult to conceive.” (200) Falling into pits and ravines

A monk asked, “What is it like when all is limpid and not a speck remains?”

The Master said, “Falling into pits and ravines.”

The monk said, “What fault is there in that?”

The Master said, “You wrong such a person.” (201) Vow to seek unsurpassed bodhi

A monk asked, “What is it like when one leaves home and vows to seek unsurpassed bodhi?”

The Master said, “Before leaving home, one is employed by bodhi; after leaving home, one can employ bodhi.” (202) This old monk is not a Buddha

A scholar saw the Master’s staff in his hand and said, “The Buddha does not deprive sentient beings of their wishes—is that so?”

The Master said, “Yes.”

The scholar said, “May I ask the Reverend for the staff in your hand?”

The Master said, “A gentleman does not take what another cherishes.”

The scholar said, “I am not a gentleman.”

The Master said, “This old monk is not a Buddha either.” (203) There is still this remaining

When the Master went out, he saw an old woman planting rice seedlings. He said, “What would you do if you suddenly encountered a fierce tiger?”

The old woman said, “There is not a single dharma to accord with the mind.”

The Master said, “Hah!”

The old woman said, “Hah!”

The Master said, “There is still this remaining.”

[Tu: Here it should be read as "xu," an exclamatory sound.] (204) How Could This Old Monk Obtain a Saddle?

As a scholar was taking leave, he said, “I have troubled you, Reverend, for a long time while staying here. Having nothing with which to repay you, I shall repay you

someday by becoming a donkey." The Master said, "How could this old monk obtain a saddle?" (205) Nanquan comes with a single arrow

The Master went to Daowu's place. As soon as he entered the monks' hall, Daowu said, "Nanquan comes with a single arrow."

The Master said, "Watch the arrow."

Daowu said, "It has passed."

The Master said, "It has struck." (206) Why seek this elsewhere? (Instruction)

The Master ascended the hall and instructed the assembly: "A gold Buddha cannot pass through a furnace; a wooden Buddha cannot pass through fire; a clay Buddha cannot pass through water. The true Buddha sits within. Bodhi, nirvāṇa, suchness, and Buddha-nature are all garments clinging to the body; they are also called afflictions. If one does not inquire, there are no afflictions. On the ground of ultimate reality, where can anything adhere? When not a single thought arises, the myriad dharmas are without fault. Just investigate the principle while sitting; if, after twenty or thirty years, you still do not understand, cut off this old monk's head."

"Dreams, illusions, flowers in empty space—how futile to grasp at them. If the mind does not differ, the myriad dharmas are likewise. Since nothing is obtained from outside, what further binds you? Why, like a sheep, keep picking up things at random and putting them in your mouth? This old monk once heard Master Yaoshan say, 'Whenever anyone asks, just tell them to shut the dog's mouth.' This old monk also says, 'Shut the dog's mouth.' To take me up is defilement; not to take me up is purity. You are like hunting dogs, intent only on getting something to eat. Where can the Buddhadharma adhere? Among a thousand or ten thousand people, all are fellows seeking Buddha; not one seeks to be a person of the Way. If you would be disciples of the King of Emptiness, do not let the disease of mind arise—it is most difficult to cure."

"Before the world existed, this nature was already present; when the world is destroyed, this nature is not destroyed. After you have once seen this old monk, you are no longer someone else; you are simply the master of the house. Why seek this elsewhere? At such a time, do not turn your head or change your face, or you will lose it." (207) The wind rises again this morning

A monk asked, "When the hundred bones have all crumbled and scattered, and one thing alone remains ever numinous, what then?"

The Master said, "The wind rises again this morning." (208) The water buffalo gives birth

A monk asked, “I do not ask about the three vehicles and the twelve divisions of the teachings. What is the Patriarch’s meaning in coming from the West?”

The Master said, “The water buffalo has given birth—look after it well!”

The monk said, “I do not understand the meaning of this.”

The Master said, “I do not know either.” (209) When you meet someone, do not call out

A monk asked, “What is it like when all the kingdoms come to pay court?”

The Master said, “When you meet someone, do not call out.” (210) The waters of the eastern river are turbid; the western stream runs swift

A monk asked, “Throughout the twelve periods of the day, how should one sift and refine?”

The Master said, “The waters of the Nai River are turbid; the western stream runs swift.”

The monk said, “Can one still see Mañjuśrī or not?”

The Master said, “You muddleheaded fellow, where have you been going and coming?” (211) What is the bodhimaṇḍa?

A monk asked, “What is the bodhimaṇḍa?”

The Master said, “You come from the bodhimaṇḍa, and you go from the bodhimaṇḍa. Your whole body is the bodhimaṇḍa—what place is not?” (212) What is it like before the sprout emerges?

A monk asked, “What is it like before the sprout emerges?”

The Master said, “Smell it, and your brain will split.”

The monk said, “What if one does not smell it?”

The Master said, “There is no leisure for such idle business.” (213) What is number?

A monk asked, “What is number?”

The Master said, “One, two, three, four, five.”

The monk said, “What about that which is not constrained by number?”

The Master said, “One, two, three, four, five.” (214) At present, is it day or night?

A monk asked, “What world has neither day nor night?”

The Master said, “At this very moment, is it day or night?”

The monk said, “I am not asking about this very moment.”

The Master said, “What can you do with this old monk?” (215) No person of the Way knows

A monk asked, “Kāśyapa’s upper robe does not tread the road of Caoxi. Who is able to wear it?”

The Master said, “Empty space does not appear in the world; no person of the Way knows.” (216) How can things be mingled yet not confused?

A monk asked, “How can things be mingled yet not confused?”

The Master said, “This old monk eats vegetables and keeps a perpetual fast.”

The monk said, “Can one still transcend this?”

The Master said, “That would break the fast.” (217) The words of the ancients

A monk asked, “What are the words of the ancients?”

The Master said, “Listen closely, listen closely.” (218) A student’s fundamental task

A monk asked, “What is a student’s fundamental task?”

The Master said, “Why object to being like this?” (219) Where does the One return?

A monk asked, “The myriad dharmas return to the One; where does the One return?”

The Master said, “When I was in Qingzhou, I made a linen robe that weighed seven pounds.” (220) What is a monastic?

A monk asked, “What is a monastic?”

The Master said, “He does not bow to the emperor; his parents bow to him instead!” (221) The one face-to-face

A monk asked, “What is the matter directly before one’s face?”

The Master said, “You are the one face-to-face.” (222) A person beyond Buddha

A monk asked, “What is a person beyond Buddha?”

The Master said, “It is simply the one leading the plowing ox.” (223) What is urgency?

A monk asked, “What is urgency?”

The Master said, “This old monk speaks thus; how do you respond?”

The monk said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “I tell you: hurriedly put on your boots and stand upon the water; ride at a gallop to Chang’an, and the tips of your boots will still not be wet.” (224) No road—this is Zhaozhou

A monk asked, “What is it like when the four mountains press in from all sides?”

The Master said, “No road—this is Zhaozhou.” (225) The thief’s body is already exposed

A monk asked, “What is it like when the ancient hall has no king?”

The Master coughed once.

The monk said, “Thus, your subject pays homage to Your Majesty.”

The Master said, “The thief’s body is already exposed.” (226) How old is the monk?

A monk asked, “How old are you, Master?”

The Master said, “A string of prayer beads cannot count it.” (227) Whose Dharma heir is the Master?

A monk asked, “Whose Dharma heir are you, Master?”

The Master said, “Congshen.” (228) Salt is expensive; rice is cheap

A monk asked, “If someone from another region suddenly asks, ‘What Dharma does Zhaozhou teach?’ how should I answer?”

The Master said, “Salt is expensive; rice is cheap.” (229) Are you a Buddha?

A monk asked, “What is Buddha?”

The Master said, “Are you a Buddha?” (230) What is leaving home?

A monk asked, “What is leaving home?”

The Master said, “How could you get to see this old monk?” (231) What is the place where Buddhas and patriarchs do not cease?

A monk asked, “What is the place where Buddhas and patriarchs do not cease?”

The Master said, “Nothing is omitted.” (232) The original source is without illness

A monk asked, “I ask the Master to point out the original source.”

The Master said, “The original source is without illness.”

The monk said, “What is it like at the point of understanding?”

The Master said, “One who understands knows.”

The monk said, “What is it like then?”

The Master said, “Give it a name for me.” (233) A very good question

A monk asked, “What is it like when there is pure unity, without admixture?”

The Master said, “A very good question.” (234) Falling into stagnant emptiness

A monk asked, “Does one who is unconditioned and quiescent fall into stagnant emptiness?”

The Master said, “They fall into stagnant emptiness.”

The monk said, “What is ultimate?”

The Master said, “Become a donkey, become a horse.” (235) If it is so, take it away

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

The Master said, “The bed leg.”

The monk said, “Could that be it?”

The Master said, “If it is, take it away.” (236) No hired laborers here

A monk asked, “What is it like when everything is clear and not a speck remains?”

The Master said, “This old monk does not keep hired laborers here.” (237) From where does it arise?

A monk asked, “What is it like where a phoenix cannot fly?”

The Master said, “From where does it arise?” (238) Everything is within here

A monk asked, “What is it like on the ground of the principle of ultimate reality, where not a single mote of dust is accepted?”

The Master said, “Everything is within here.” (239) What is the one phrase?

A monk asked, “What is the one phrase?”

The Master responded. The monk asked again.

The Master said, “I do not suffer from deafness.” (240) Hitting a ball atop rushing water

A monk asked, “Does a newborn child still possess the six consciousnesses?”

The Master said, “Hitting a ball atop rushing water.” (241) What is it like when everything arrives?

A monk asked, “What is it like when everything arrives?”

The Master said, “You are still a hundred paces behind this old monk.” (242) Shaking out this worn-out livelihood

A monk asked, “What is the Master’s family style?”

The Master said, “This old monk left home in childhood and has shaken out this worn-out livelihood.” (243) Always within here

A monk asked, “Please speak apart from the four propositions.”

The Master said, “This old monk is always within here.” (244) One drop of sweet dew moistens the entire great thousandfold world

A monk asked, “Why is Bian Que, the king of physicians, ill?”

The Master said, “Bian Que, the king of physicians, never leaves his bed and pillow.”

He further said, “One drop of sweet dew moistens the entire great thousandfold world.” (245) The white ox in the open

A monk asked, “What is the white ox in the open?”

The Master said, “That beast.” (246) This old monk has no time for idle fellows who curry favor

A monk asked, “What are the marks of a great person?”

The Master cast a sidelong glance at him.

The monk said, “You are still currying favor from across the steps.”

The Master said, “This old monk has no time for idle fellows who curry favor.” (247) I cannot answer you

A monk asked, “As soon as a thought arises, one falls into the human and heavenly realms. If no thought at all arises, what is it like to fall among one’s dependents?”

The Master said, “Not only this old monk—even a true master could not answer you.” (248) Whatever is done all falls into dregs

A monk asked, “Whatever is done all falls into dregs. I ask the Master to answer without doing anything.”

The Master shouted, “Bring water and add it to the cauldron to make it boil!” (249) What is Prajñāpāramitā?

A monk asked, “What is Prajñāpāramitā?”

The Master said, “Mahāprajñāpāramitā.” (250) Do not bite this old monk

A monk asked, “What is a man-biting lion?”

The Master said, “I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Dharma, I take refuge in the Saṅgha. Do not bite this old monk.” (251) Please speak apart from words and phrases

A monk asked, “Please speak apart from words and phrases.”

The Master coughed. (252) What do you say, Ācārya?

A monk asked, “How can I avoid slandering the ancients and failing to repay kindness?”

The Master said, “What do you say, Ācārya?” (253) Say what?

A monk asked, “What is the one phrase?”

The Master said, “Say what?!” (254) Two phrases

A monk asked, “What is the one phrase?”

The Master said, “Two phrases.” (255) Demonic speech

A monk asked, “What about saying that only the Buddha is a good spiritual friend?”

The Master said, “Demonic speech.” (256) What is bodhi?

A monk asked, “What is bodhi?”

The Master said, “This is an icchantika.” (257) A fine descendant

A monk asked, “What are the marks of a great person?”

The Master said, “What a fine descendant.” (258) The old monk is behind you

A monk asked, “What about when one is solitary and without support?”

The Master said, “The old monk is behind you.” (259) A person in the monastery

A monk asked, “What is the monastery?”

The Master said, “What more is there?”

He asked, “What is a person in the monastery?”

The Master said, “The old monk and the venerable one.” (260) Two dragons contend for a pearl

A monk asked, “When two dragons contend for a pearl, who obtains it?”

The Master said, “The old monk merely watches.” (261) What is a person free of cause and effect?

A monk asked, “What is a person free of cause and effect?”

The Master said, “Had you not asked, venerable one, the old monk truly would not know.” (262) Naturally not knowing

A monk asked, “A group of blind men feel an elephant, each offering a different account.

What is the true elephant?”

The Master said, “Without falsehood, naturally I do not know.” (263) The old monk may not even cough

A monk asked, “What is the first statement?”

The Master coughed.

He said, “Could that be it?”

The Master said, “The old monk may not even cough.” (264) I shall never say that I receive all streams

A monk asked, “Does the great ocean receive all streams or not?”

The Master said, “The great ocean says that it does not know.”

He asked, “Why does it not know?”

The Master said, “I shall never say, ‘I receive all streams.’” (265) What is Vairocana’s master?

A monk asked, “What is Vairocana’s master?”

The Master said, “Vairocana, Vairocana.” (266) What is the master of all Buddhas?

A monk asked, “Do all Buddhas also have a master?”

The Master said, “They do.”

He asked, “What is the master of all Buddhas?”

The Master said, “Amitābha Buddha, Amitābha Buddha.” (267) It is your master, but you do not recognize it

A monk asked, “What is the master of this student?”

The Master said, “Clouds have the force to leave the mountain; water makes no sound as it enters the ravine.”

He said, “I was not asking about that.”

The Master said, “It is your master, but you do not recognize it.” (268) You have just recognized the old monk’s heel

A monk asked, “Everywhere they speak from the mouth. How does Your Reverence instruct people?”

The Master struck the brazier with his heel to show him.

He said, “Could that be it?”

The Master said, “You have just recognized the old monk’s heel.” (269) What about when one does not travel the great Way?

A monk asked, “What about when one does not travel the great Way?”

The Master said, “This fellow is trafficking in illicit salt.”

He asked, “What about when one does travel the great Way?”

The Master said, “Bring me your official travel permit.” (270) Even through a thousand lives and ten thousand lives, you will not know the old monk

A monk asked, “What is the original body?”

The Master said, “Ever since you came to know the old monk, this fellow has been no different.”

He said, “If so, then I shall be separated from Your Reverence in another life.”

The Master said, “Not only in this life—in a thousand lives and ten thousand lives, you will not know the old monk.” (271) A gourd hangs on the eastern wall

A monk asked, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?”

The Master said, “How long has a gourd hung on the eastern wall?” (272) What about when neither square nor round is accomplished?

A monk asked, “What about when neither square nor round is accomplished?”

The Master said, “Neither square nor round.”

He asked, “What about at such a time?”

The Master said, “Square and round.” (273) What about when persons of the Way meet?

A monk asked, “What about when persons of the Way meet?”

The Master said, “Present a lacquer vessel.” (274) Why can truth not be contemplated?

A monk asked, “Why can truth not be contemplated?”

The Master said, “Truth is not absent, but contemplation cannot attain it.”

He asked, “Ultimately, how is it?”

The Master said, “Truth is lost.” (275) Persons of the Way regard it as snot and spit

A monk asked, “What about when neither practice nor questioning reaches it?”

The Master said, “Whether reached or not reached, persons of the Way regard it as snot and spit.”

He asked, “What is the matter within this?”

The Master spat on the ground. (276) There is no second master

A monk asked, “What is the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?”

The Master said, “So long as you call it the Patriarch’s meaning, it is still not there.”

He asked, “What about the original?”

The Master said, “Four eyes face one another; there is no second master.” (277) Without possessing outward form, is there still understanding?

A monk asked, “Without possessing outward form, is there still understanding?”

The Master said, “Do you understand right now?” (278) All possess the inconceivable

A monk asked, “What is a person utterly without shame?”

The Master said, “All possess the inconceivable.” (279) Where there is a Buddha, pass swiftly by; where there is no Buddha, do not remain

A monk asked, “This student intends to go south to learn a little Buddhadharma. How is that?”

The Master said, “When you go south, wherever there is a Buddha, pass swiftly by; wherever there is no Buddha, do not remain.”

He said, “Then this student has nothing on which to rely.”

The Master said, “Willow catkins, willow catkins.” (280) What is the urgent point?

A monk asked, “What is the urgent point?”

The Master said, “One question, one answer.” (281) I follow your words

A monk asked, “Without relying on the three-inch tongue, is there still any need for the present moment?”

The Master said, “I follow your words. How do you understand this?” (282) What is Your Reverence’s family style?

A monk asked, “What is Your Reverence’s family style?”

The Master said, “In the vast universe, people are countless.”

He said, “I ask that Your Reverence not answer with words.”

The Master said, “Should the old monk be thus?” (283) The loser suffers no loss; the winner has no use for it

A monk asked, “When two dragons contend for a pearl, who obtains it?”

The Master said, “The loser suffers no loss; the winner has no use for it.” (284) What are the marks of a great person?

A monk asked, “What are the marks of a great person?”

The Master said, “What is it?” (285) Is it ancient or is it present?

A layman offered a kāṣāya and asked, “In wearing such a robe, would one not fail the ancients?”

The Master threw down his whisk and said, “Is it ancient or is it present?” (286) Extending the hands but not the feet

A monk asked, “What is the conduct of a śramaṇa?”

The Master said, “Extending the hands but not the feet.” (287) Before Niutou met the Fourth Patriarch

A monk asked, “What was it like before Niutou met the Fourth Patriarch?”

The Master said, “Ample firewood, ample water.”

He asked, “What about after he met him?”

The Master said, “Ample firewood, ample water.” (288) Have you finished eating your gruel?

A monk asked, “What is this student himself?”

The Master said, “Have you finished eating your gruel?”

He said, “I have eaten my gruel.”

The Master said, “Go wash your bowl.” (289) What is Vairocana’s master?

A monk asked, “What is Vairocana’s master?”

The Master said, “Has the white camel come?”

He said, “It has come.”

The Master said, “Lead it away and feed it grass.” (290) The old monk has never taught you

A monk asked, “What is wisdom without a teacher?”

The Master said, “The old monk has never taught you.” (291) An intimate word

A monk asked, “What is an intimate word?”

The Master said, “Your words have fallen into it.” (292) The old monk has never come out

A monk asked, “Without relying on speech, is discussion still permitted?”

The Master said, “Precisely at this time.”

He said, “Then I ask the Master to discuss it.”

The Master said, “The old monk has never come out.” (293) Why did the Second Patriarch cut off his arm?

A monk asked, “Why did the Second Patriarch cut off his arm?”

The Master said, “Crushed to powder, body shattered to pieces.”

He asked, “Whom do you make offerings to?”

The Master said, “I make offerings to whoever comes.” (294) You are an ācārya

A monk asked, “Why can the Bodhisattva of Boundless Body not see the Tathāgata’s crown-mark?”

The Master said, “You are an ācārya.” (295) Sunlight and firelight

A monk asked, “By day there is sunlight, and by night there is firelight. What is the numinous light?”

The Master said, “Sunlight and firelight.” (296) What is the fitting place to ask?

A monk asked, “What is the fitting place to ask?”

The Master said, “Wrong.”

He asked, “What is the place not to ask?”

The Master said, “Discern it within the preceding sentence.” (297) Folding the hands and composing one’s countenance

A monk asked, “What are the marks of a great person?”

The Master touched his face with his hand, folded his hands, and composed his countenance. (298) What is non-contrivance?

A monk asked, “What is non-contrivance?”

The Master said, “This is contrived.” (299) Losing the ox inside the fence

A monk asked, “What was the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?”

The Master said, “Losing the ox inside the fence.” (300) As soon as one enters the gate, one deserves a faceful of spit

A monk asked, “I have come from afar. Please, Reverend, instruct me.”

The Master said, “As soon as you enter the gate, you deserve a faceful of spit.” (301) Has the boatman from Huainan arrived yet?

A monk asked, “What is the direct path?”

The Master said, “Has the boatman from Huainan arrived yet?”

The monk said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “I am glad you have arrived.” (302) Does the cypress tree have Buddha-nature?

A monk asked, “Does the cypress tree have Buddha-nature or not?”

The Master said, “It does.”

The monk asked, “When will it become a Buddha?”

The Master said, “When empty space falls to the ground.”

The monk asked, “When will empty space fall to the ground?”

The Master said, “When the cypress tree becomes a Buddha.” (303) Why do you scold this old monk in the monastery?

A monk asked, “What was the meaning of coming from the West?”

The Master said, “Why do you scold this old monk in the monastery?”

The monk said, “What fault have I committed?”

The Master said, “This old monk cannot scold you, ācārya, in the monastery.” (304) Hair growing from the teeth of a plank

A monk asked, “What was the meaning of coming from the West?”

The Master said, “Hair growing from the teeth of a plank.” (305) Merely keeping to poverty

A monk asked, “A poor fellow has come. What will you give him?”

The Master said, “He is not poor.”

The monk said, “But what can I do when I am seeking you, Reverend?”

The Master said, “Merely keep to poverty.” (306) As though separated by silk gauze

A monk asked, “Why can the Bodhisattva of Boundless Body not see the Tathāgata’s crown-mark?”

The Master said, “As though separated by silk gauze.”

[Gu: gu] (307) Thank You for Bringing It Here

A monk asked, “Who may drink the sweet dew of the devas?”

The Master said, “Thank you for bringing it.” (308) What of one who transcends heaven and earth?

A monk asked, “What of one who transcends heaven and earth?”

The Master said, “When there is such a person, report it to me.” (309) The mountain gate and Buddha hall

A monk asked, “What is a monastery?”

The Master said, “The mountain gate and the Buddha hall.” (310) Neither arising nor ceasing

A monk asked, “What is neither arising nor ceasing?”

The Master said, “It has never arisen from the beginning, and now it does not cease.” (311) The Lord of Zhaozhou

A monk asked, “Who is the Lord of Zhaozhou?”

The Master said, “His Majesty is.” (312) At the urgent point, please speak, Master

A monk asked, “At the urgent point, please speak, Master.”

The Master said, “Urinating is a small matter; this old monk must go himself for it to do.” (313) Cutting a collar under the armpit

A monk asked, “What is the sixteen-foot golden body?”

The Master said, “Cutting a collar under the armpit.”

The monk said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “If you do not understand, ask someone to cut it.” (314) What if one has doubts?

A monk asked, “What should I do when I have doubts?”

The Master said, “A large convenience or a small convenience?”

The monk said, “A large doubt.”

The Master said, “For a large convenience, go to the northeast corner; for a small convenience, behind the monks’ hall.” (315) Why ask about above and below?

A monk asked, “What is one above the Buddha?”

The Master got down from the meditation seat, looked the monk up and down, and said, “This fellow is so tall that he could be cut into three pieces. Why ask about above and below?” (316) You still have this

A nun asked, “What is the most intimate meaning?”

The Master pinched her with his hand.

She said, “Reverend, you still have this!”

The Master said, “It is you who have this.” (317) The discourse without host and guest

The Master instructed the assembly: “Thirty years ago, when this old monk was in the south, there was a discourse without host and guest by the brazier. Down to the present, no one has raised it.”

[Collection of the Patriarchs’ Hall, fascicle 18, “Chan Master Zhaozhou”: The Master instructed the assembly: “Thirty years ago, when I was in the south by the brazier, I raised the discourse without host and guest. Down to the present, no one has raised it.” Someone asked Xuefeng, “How did Zhaozhou speak of the discourse without host and guest?” Xuefeng immediately knocked him down.] (318) Give him one coin

A monk asked, “Since the Reverend receives such offerings from the king, how will you repay him?”

The Master said, “Buddha-recitation.”

The monk said, “This poor fellow too knows how to recite the Buddha’s name.”

The Master said, “Call the attendant and have him give this man one coin.” (319) The framework still remains

A monk asked, “What is the style of your household, Reverend?”

The Master said, “Though the screen is broken, its framework still remains.” (320) Wild ducks

A monk asked, “What is the meaning of non-movement?”

The Master said, “Tell me: do these wild ducks fly from east to west?” (321) Where did you get this news?

A monk asked, “What was the meaning of coming from the West?”

The Master said, “Where did you get this news?” (322) Donate money for tea and salt

A monk asked, “What is a person amid the dust?”

The Master said, “Donate money for tea and salt.” (323) In Tripiṭaka’s nostrils

A monk asked, “When the Great-Eared Tripiṭaka sought the National Teacher for the third time, he could not see him. Where was the National Teacher?”

The Master said, “In Tripiṭaka’s nostrils.” (324) It is no accidental matter

A monk asked, “What of a blind turtle encountering a hole in a floating log?”

The Master said, “It is no accidental matter.” (325) Why not hide away?

A monk asked, “What of living long amid cliffs and valleys?”

The Master said, “Why not hide away?” (326) Make prostrations

A monk asked, “What is the great meaning of the Buddhadharma?”

The Master said, “Make prostrations.”

As the monk was about to continue speaking, the Master called the novice Wenyan.

When Wenyan came, the Master scolded him, saying, “Where have you just been?” (327) This old monk has no need for an ox-cleaver

A monk asked, “What is one’s own original intent?”

The Master said, “This old monk has no need for an ox-cleaver.” (328) Long have I heard of Zhaozhou’s stone bridge

A monk asked, “Long have I heard of Zhaozhou’s stone bridge, but upon arriving I see only a little footbridge.”

The Master said, “You see only the little footbridge, ācārya; do you not see Zhaozhou’s stone bridge?”

The monk said, “What is Zhaozhou’s stone bridge?”

The Master said, “Come over, come over.” (329) What is the stone bridge?

Another monk asked, “Long have I heard of Zhaozhou’s stone bridge, but upon arriving I see only a little footbridge.”

The Master said, “You see only the little footbridge; do you not see Zhaozhou’s stone bridge?”

The monk said, “What is the stone bridge?”

The Master said, “It carries donkeys and horses across.” (330) Changzhou and Suzhou

A monk asked, “What is your surname, Reverend?”

The Master said, “Changzhou has it.”

The monk said, “How old are you?”

The Master said, “Suzhou has it.” (331) As soon as there is right and wrong, the mind is thrown into confusion

The Master addressed the assembly: “The moment there is right and wrong, the mind is thrown into confusion. Is there still any room for an answer?”

A monk stepped forward, patted the attendant once, and said, “Why do you not answer the Master directly?”

The Master then returned to his quarters.

Later, the attendant requested instruction: “Did that monk just now understand or not?”

The Master said, “Those sitting see those standing; those standing see those sitting.” (332) The Great Way Leads to Chang’an

A monk asked, “What is the Way?”

The Master said, “Outside the wall.”

The monk said, “I am not asking about that.”

The Master said, “What Way are you asking about?”

The monk said, “The Great Way.”

The Master said, “The Great Way leads to Chang’an.” (333) Seeing the Buddha Is Not Attainable

A monk asked, “When one brushes away the dust and sees the Buddha, how is it?”

The Master said, “Brushing away the dust is not absent, but seeing the Buddha is not attainable.” (334) A Body Free of Illness

A monk asked, “What is a body free of illness?”

The Master said, “The four elements and five aggregates.” (335) What Is an Icchantika?

A monk asked, “What is an icchantika?”

The Master said, “Why not ask about bodhi?”

The monk said, “What is bodhi?”

The Master said, “This very thing is an icchantika.” (336) Not Presenting Objects to Others

At one time, the Master curled his fingers into a fist and said, “This old monk calls it a fist. What do all of you call it?”

A monk said, “How can the Reverend present an object to others?”

The Master said, “I do not present an object to others. If I were to present an object to you, Venerable, I would bury you.”

The monk said, “But what about this?”

The Master simply said, “Take care.” (337) Deserves Twenty Blows

A monk asked, “With every question and answer, one falls into the heavenly demons and non-Buddhist paths. Even if one says nothing, one still violates their net. What is the family style of Zhaozhou?”

The Master said, “You do not know how to ask.”

The monk said, “Please, Master, give an answer.”

The Master said, “By your lights, you deserve twenty blows.” (338) Thirty Years Playing with Horses, Yet Knocked Down by a Donkey

The Master addressed the assembly: “The moment there is right and wrong, the mind is thrown into confusion. Is there still any room for an answer?”

A monk stepped forward, slapped a novice once, and then went out. The Master returned to his quarters.

The next day, the Master asked the attendant, “Where was that monk yesterday?”

The attendant said, “He left at once.”

The Master said, “For thirty years I have played with horses, yet I was knocked down by a donkey.” (339) How Does the Master Receive One Who Does Not Come Thus?

A monk asked, “Does the Master receive one who comes thus?”

The Master said, “I receive him.”

The monk said, “Does the Master receive one who does not come thus?”

The Master said, “I receive him.”

The monk said, “One who comes thus is received by the Master. How does the Master receive one who does not come thus?”

The Master said, “Stop! Stop! No need to speak. My Dharma is wondrous and inconceivable.” (340) Though There Is Only One, It Bites Every Time

The Prince of Zhen Prefecture asked, “Venerable Master, at your age, how many teeth remain?”

The Master said, “Only one tooth.”

The prince said, “How can you eat anything?”

The Master said, “Though there is only one, it bites every time.” (341) What Is the Student’s Jewel?

A monk asked, “What is the student’s jewel?”

The Master said, “Ask in a loud voice.”

The monk made a bow.

The Master said, “You do not know how to ask. Why did you not say, ‘I do not ask about high or low; what is the student’s jewel?’ Why did you not ask in that way?”

The monk asked again, and the Master said, “I was just about to let this fellow off.” (342) This Year There Are No Winds and Waves

A monk asked, “When the two sides are utterly still, how does the Master expound the Dharma?”

The Master said, “This year there are no winds and waves.” (343) Hauling Timber, Raising the Monks’ Hall

A monk asked, “When the great assembly gathers, what should be discussed?”

The Master said, “Today we are hauling timber and raising the monks’ hall.”

The monk said, “Could this alone be receiving students?”

The Master said, “This old monk does not know how to play double-six, nor does he know changxing.”

[Double-six was an ancient gaming implement and also a board game. Changxing was an ancient gambling game, popular in the Tang dynasty, which later developed into double-six.] (344) What Is the True Human Body?

A monk asked, “What is the true human body?”

The Master said, “Spring, summer, autumn, and winter.”

The monk said, “Then this is difficult for this student to understand.”

The Master said, “You asked me about the true human body.” (345) Within Hanyuan Hall, Amid the Golden Valley Garden

A monk asked, “What is the great meaning of the Buddha-Dharma?”

The Master said, “What is your name?”

The monk said, “So-and-so.”

The Master said, “Within Hanyuan Hall, amid the Golden Valley Garden.” (346) What Is the Teacher of the Seven Buddhas?

A monk asked, “What is the teacher of the seven Buddhas?”

The Master said, “When it is time to sleep, sleep; when it is time to rise, rise.” (347) Dragons and Snakes Are Easy to Distinguish; a Robed Monk Is Hard to Deceive

A monk asked, “The Way is not outside things, and outside things is not the Way. What is the Way outside things?”

The Master struck him.

The monk said, “Master, do not strike this monk, or later you may strike the wrong person.”

The Master said, “Dragons and snakes are easy to distinguish; a robed monk is hard to deceive.” (348) Too Weak to Get Down from the Meditation Seat

When the Master saw the prince enter the monastery, he did not rise. Instead, he patted his knee with his hand and said, “Do you understand?”

The prince said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “I left home in childhood and am old now; when I see people, I lack the strength to get down from the meditation seat.” (349) Your Mother Is Ugly

A monk asked, “What is honest counsel?”

The Master said, “Your mother is ugly.” (350) What About One Who Does Not Forget?

A monk asked, “What about one who, from ancient times until now, has not forgotten?”

The Master said, “The mind cannot be bound; constantly recollect all Buddhas of the ten directions.” (351) Eat an Iron Rod

A monk asked, “What is honest counsel?”

The Master said, “Eat an iron rod.” (352) Clapping His Hands and Laughing Loudly

A monk asked, “What is the matter beyond the Buddha?”

The Master clapped his hands and laughed loudly. (353) From Where Does the One Lamp Arise?

A monk asked, “One lamp lights hundreds and thousands of lamps. From where does the one lamp arise?”

The Master kicked out one shoe. He then said, “A true adept would not ask in that way.”

[Ti (tì): to kick] (354) What If Illumination Follows and Loses Its Source?

A monk asked, “When one returns to the root and attains the essential point, but in following the illumination loses the source, how is it?”

The Master said, “This old monk will not answer that question.”

The monk said, “Please, Master, give an answer.”

The Master said, “Must I answer in that way?”

[He: to answer] (355) Speak Quickly, Speak Quickly

A monk asked, “What is the place beyond thought?”

The Master said, “Speak quickly, speak quickly.” (356) Even Until Now, He Has Not Attained the Wondrous

A monk asked, “At night he ascends to Tuṣita; by day he descends to Jambudvīpa. Why does the mani jewel not appear therein?”

The Master said, “What did you say?”

The monk asked again.

The Master said, “Vipaśyin Buddha set his mind on it too early; even until now, he has not attained the wondrous.” (357) Speak Quickly, Speak Quickly

A monk asked, “What is the place beyond conceptualization?”

The Master said, “Speak quickly, speak quickly.” (358) What Does This One Question Dislike?

A monk asked, “What is the jewel in the garment?”

The Master said, “What does this one question dislike?”

The monk said, “This is the question; what is the jewel?”

The Master said, “Then even the garment has been lost.” (359) Lodge in the Chan Monastery

A monk asked, “What is it like when there are no inns for ten thousand miles?”

The Master said, “Lodge in the Chan monastery.” (360) Every Household’s Door Leads to Chang’an

A monk asked, “Does a dog have Buddha-nature or not?”

The Master said, “Every household’s door leads to Chang’an.” (361) I Tell You: Lower Your Voice

A monk asked, “When face-to-face presentation is made, does it completely convey the great meaning or not?”

The Master said, “Lower your voice.”

He said, “What about where it cannot be gathered in?”

The Master said, “I tell you: keep your voice low.” (362) The old monk is not as good as you

A monk asked, “What is the phrase before one’s very eyes?”

The Master said, “The old monk is not as good as you.” (363) What sort of person has emerged?

A monk asked, “What sort of person has emerged?”

The Master said, “Buddhas and bodhisattvas.” (364) When someone comes, do not tell him

A monk asked, “What is it like before the numinous grass has sprouted?”

The Master said, “If you smell it, your brain will split.”

He said, “What if one does not smell it?”

The Master said, “Like a man who has died standing.”

He said, “Will you permit this student to join with it?”

The Master said, “When someone comes, do not tell him.” (365) Are the patriarchal intent and the doctrinal intent the same or different?

A monk asked, “Are the patriarchal intent and the doctrinal intent the same or different?”

The Master said, “Only recently left home and not yet received the precepts, yet already asking people everywhere.” (366) What a fine Chan monk

A monk asked, “What is a sage?”

The Master said, “Not ordinary.”

He said, “What is ordinary?”

The Master said, “Not a sage.”

He said, “What about when one is neither ordinary nor a sage?”

The Master said, “What a fine Chan monk.” (367) The Ācārya’s eyelids cover Mount Sumeru

A monk asked, “When two mirrors face each other, which is brightest?”

The Master said, “The Ācārya’s eyelids cover Mount Sumeru.” (368) This student has recently entered the monastic community and begs the Master for instruction

A monk asked, “This student has recently entered the monastic community and begs the Master for instruction.”

The Master said, “Heavens above, heavens above!” (369) To name it is already impossible

A monk asked, “When the preceding phrase has passed and the following phrase is hard to understand, what then?”

The Master said, “To name it is already impossible.”

He said, “Please distinguish it for me, Master.”

The Master said, “Ask, ask.” (370) The old monk does not go to the summit of a high peak

A monk asked, “When a lofty peak is difficult to climb, what then?”

The Master said, “The old monk does not go to the summit of a high peak.” (371) One who is not companion to the myriad dharmas

A monk asked, “Who is one who is not companion to the myriad dharmas?”

The Master said, “Not a person.” (372) Today I have no money to give the official

A monk asked, “Please give a phrase from within the vehicle of your school, Master.”

The Master said, “Today I have no money to give the official.” (373) Strange indeed

A monk asked, “This student does not ask differently; please do not answer differently.”

The Master said, “Strange indeed.” (374) The sun and moon have never changed

A monk asked, “Apart from the teachings of the three vehicles, how do you receive people?”

The Master said, “Since this world came to be, the sun and moon have never changed.” (375) Consciousness is extraneous

A monk asked, “When the three places do not connect, how does one leave consciousness behind?”

The Master said, “Consciousness is extraneous.” (376) Do not speak of the matter within

A monk asked, “When all kinds of people gather here, what is the matter within?”

The Master said, “My eyes are originally straight; I do not speak of the matter within.” (377) Who is one who does not stop at the pure ground?

A monk asked, “Who is one who does not stop at the pure ground?”

The Master said, “You are not yet one of those within.”

He said, “Who is one of those within?”

The Master said, “One who stops.” (378) The source of the myriad dharmas

A monk asked, “What is the source of the myriad dharmas?”

The Master said, “Beams, rafters, and pillars.”

He said, “This student does not understand.”

The Master said, “Do you not understand the bracket sets and joined hands?” (379) When one brings not a single thing

A monk asked, “What about when one brings not a single thing?”

The Master said, “Put it down.” (380) A man comes from Chenzhou but receives no news from Xuzhou

A monk asked, “When you meet a person of the Way on the road, do not respond with speech or silence. With what, then, do you respond?”

The Master said, “A man comes from Chenzhou but receives no news from Xuzhou.” (381) Conditioned and unconditioned

A monk asked, “Opening one’s mouth is conditioned activity; what is the unconditioned?”

The Master gestured with his hand and said, “This is the unconditioned.”

He said, “This is conditioned activity; what is the unconditioned?”

The Master said, “The unconditioned.”

He said, “This is conditioned activity.”

The Master said, “It is conditioned activity.” (382) I do not like hearing the word ‘Buddha’ (Instruction)

The Master instructed the assembly, saying, “I do not like hearing the word ‘Buddha.’” (383) Does the Reverend still act for others?

A monk asked, “Does the Reverend still act for others?”

The Master said, “Buddha, Buddha.” (384) The great has no outside; the small has no inside

A monk asked, “When the present moment has been completely exhausted, what is the precise place?”

The Master said, “When the present moment has been completely exhausted, do not ask about that.”

He said, “What is the precise thing?”

The Master said, “I tell you: do not ask.”

He said, “How may one see it?”

The Master said, “The great has no outside; the small has no inside.” (385) What could you point out?

A monk asked, “What about when one is apart from the four propositions and cuts off the hundred negations?”

The Master said, “This old monk does not recognize death.”

He said, “This is a matter belonging to the Reverend.”

The Master said, “Exactly so.”

He said, “Please point it out, Reverend.”

The Master said, “Apart from the four propositions and cutting off the hundred negations—what could I point out?” (386) Within, not a single thing; without, nothing

sought

A monk asked, “What is the Master’s family style?”

The Master said, “Within, not a single thing; without, nothing sought.” (387) To answer you would already be wrong

A monk asked, “What is returning to the root and attaining the essential point?”

The Master said, “To answer you would already be wrong.” (388) What is the doubting mind?

A monk asked, “What is the doubting mind?”

The Master said, “To answer you would already be wrong.” (389) In that case, it is leaving home

A monk asked, “Does one who has left home still act as a layperson?”

The Master said, “Leaving home is just this. Whether the Lecturer has left home or not is none of this old monk’s concern.”

He said, “Why is it none of your concern?”

The Master said, “In that case, it is leaving home.” (390) Undefiled wisdom-nature is originally complete

A monk asked, “What about a disciple without a teacher?”

The Master said, “Undefiled wisdom-nature is originally complete.”

He further said, “This is a disciple without a teacher.” (391) What about when no boundary or sign can be seen?

A monk asked, “What about when no boundary or sign can be seen?”

The Master said, “Why is it like this?” (392) Truly pitiable

A monk asked, “What about when it is clear yet not limpid, turbid yet not muddy?”

The Master said, “Neither limpid nor muddy.”

He said, “What is that?”

The Master said, “Truly pitiable.”

He said, “What is the all-purpose way?”

The Master said, “Leave behind Vajra Chan.” (393) What is used is weighty

A monk asked, “What is the treasure in the bag?”

The Master said, “What do you dislike?”

He said, “What about when its use is inexhaustible?”

The Master said, “Is your own [treasure] still weighty?”

He further said, “What is used is weighty; what is not used is light.” (394) The Master spat on the ground again

A monk asked, “What is the patriarch’s precise intent?”

The Master spat.

He said, “What is the matter within this?”

The Master spat on the ground again. (395) Conduct apart from conduct

A monk asked, “What is the conduct of a śramaṇa?”

The Master said, “Conduct apart from conduct.” (396) To point is not rest

A monk asked, “At the place of true rest, please point it out, Master.”

The Master said, “To point is not rest.” (397) Contrary to ordinary speech

A monk asked, “What about when there is no question?”

The Master said, “Contrary to ordinary speech.” (398) No trace of emergence

A monk asked, “When the four mountains close in from all sides, what then?”

The Master said, “There is no trace of escape.” (399) The Place Where Nothing Can Be Said

A monk asked, “When one reaches this place where nothing can be said, what then?”

The Master said, “Nothing can be said.”

The monk said, “How is it spoken?”

The Master said, “The place where nothing can be said.” (400) What Is Beyond the Summit?

A monk asked, “So long as there are words and phrases, none goes beyond the summit. What is beyond the summit?”

The Master called to the novice Wenyuan.

Wenyuan answered.

The Master said, “What time is it today?” (401) Do Not Speak Harshly

A monk asked, “Who is the teacher of Vairocana?” The Master said, “Do not speak harshly.” (402) Where Is Discrimination?

A monk asked, “The supreme Way is not difficult; it only rejects discrimination. How can one be free of discrimination?”

The Master said, “Above heaven and below heaven, I alone am honored.”

The monk said, “This is still discrimination.”

The Master said, “You slave of the field storehouse, where is there discrimination?” (403) Yet This Old Monk Is Within the Three Realms

A monk asked, “Who is a person beyond the three realms?”

The Master said, “Yet this old monk is within the three realms.” (404) Then You Are Deliberately Questioning This Old Monk

A monk asked, “How is one who knows that there is no ‘there is’?”

The Master said, “If you ask again, you are deliberately questioning this old monk.” (405) Here I Am in a Grove of Firewood

The Master instructed the assembly, saying, “Go south and seek out the monasteries. Do not remain here.”

A monk then asked, “What sort of place is this, Master?”

The Master said, “Here I am in a grove of firewood.” (406) By Nature, a Disciple

A monk asked, “Who is the teacher of Vairocana?” The Master said, “By nature, a disciple.” (407) I Do Not Know Where It Arises From

A monk asked, “When one returns to the root and attains the essential meaning, what then?”

The Master said, “You are in far too much of a hurry.”

The monk said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “I do not know where it arises from.” (408) Why Does a Great Spiritual Friend Sweep Away Dust?

When Minister Liu entered the monastery, he saw the Master sweeping the ground and asked, “Why does a great spiritual friend sweep away dust?”

The Master said, “It comes from outside.” (409) When a Sharp Sword Leaves Its Scabbard

A monk asked, “When a sharp sword leaves its scabbard, what then?”

The Master said, “Black.”

The monk said, “As I am asking, how can one distinguish white?”

The Master said, “There is no leisure for that.”

The monk said, “When one folds one’s hands before another, what then?”

The Master said, “Sooner or later, I will see you fold your hands.”

The monk said, “What about when one does not fold one’s hands?”

The Master said, “Who is it that does not fold his hands?” (410) Where Does a Śramaṇa Gain Strength?

A monk asked, “Where does a śramaṇa gain strength?”

The Master said, “Where do you lack strength?” (411) There Is No Student Before Me

A monk asked, “How does the Master instruct students?”

The Master said, “There is no student before me.”

The monk said, “Then you do not appear in the world.”

The Master thereupon took his leave. (412) The Master Made a Fist and Placed It on His Head

A monk asked, “Are the ancestral intent and the intent of the teachings the same or different?”

The Master made a fist and placed it on his head.

The monk said, “Master, do you still have this?”

The Master took off his cap and said, “Tell me, what does this old monk have?” (413) How Can One Avoid Being Driven by Consciousness?

A monk asked, “When the mind neither stops nor abides, what then?”

The Master said, “It is a living thing. This is precisely being driven by consciousness.”

The monk said, “How can one avoid being driven by consciousness?”

The Master lowered his head. (414) From Where Does the Way Arise?

A monk asked, “From where does the Way arise?”

The Master said, “This arises, but the Way does not belong to arising and ceasing.”

The monk said, “Is it not natural?”

The Master said, “This is natural, but the Way is not like that.” (415) To Understand the Ancestral Intent Is to Understand the Intent of the Teachings

A monk asked, “Are the ancestral intent and the intent of the teachings the same or different?”

The Master said, “To understand the ancestral intent is to understand the intent of the teachings.” (416) Oṃ Bùlín

A monk asked, “What is it to move among those of other kinds?”

The Master said, “Oṃ bùlín, oṃ bùlín.” (417) It Is Too Lofty

A monk asked, “When it is lofty and difficult to climb, what then?”

The Master said, “This old monk himself dwells on the summit.”

The monk said, “But what of the road beside Caoxi?”

The Master said, “Caoxi is bad.”

The monk said, “Why do people not go there nowadays?”

The Master said, “It is too lofty.” (418) It Stops Up This Old Monk’s Ears

A monk asked, “What is it when the precious moon hangs in the sky?”

The Master said, “It stops up this old monk’s ears.” (419) When Responding to the Occasion

A monk asked, “When there is an error of a hair’s breadth, what then?”

The Master said, “Crude.”

The monk said, “What about when responding to the occasion?”

The Master said, “Bend.” (420) The Master Extended His Hand and Brushed Off His Robe

A monk asked, “What is the conduct of a śramaṇa?”

The Master extended his hand and brushed off his robe. (421) No One Knows

A monk asked, “What is the place where the life of the patriarchs and Buddhas does not cease?”

The Master said, “No one knows.” (422) It Is Called an Expedient Device

A monk asked, “What, pray, is called an expedient device?”

The Master said, “It is called an expedient device.” (423) Before Entering a Monastery, You Understood Even Less

A monk asked, “This student has recently entered a monastery and does not understand. I beg the Master for instruction.”

The Master said, “Before entering a monastery, you understood even less.” (424) This Old Monk Is Not an Ancient Worthy

A monk asked, “What did the ancient worthies of old use to show people?”

The Master said, “Had you not asked, this old monk would not even have known that there were ancient worthies.”

The monk said, “I beg the Master for instruction.”

The Master said, “This old monk is not an ancient worthy.” (425) What Is Genuine and Real?

A monk asked, “Before the Buddha-flower has blossomed, how can one discern what is genuine and real?”

The Master said, “It is genuine; it is real.”

The monk said, “Whose affair is this?”

The Master said, “This old monk has a share in it; you, Ācārya, have a share in it.” (426) Who Are You?

A monk asked, “What is Buddha?”

The Master said, “Who are you?” (427) The Straight Road

A monk asked, “What about the straight road?”

The Master said, “The straight road.” (428) Mystery Unceasing Within Mystery

A monk asked, “What is mystery unceasing within mystery?”

The Master said, “Your asking me is unceasing mystery.” (429) The True Is the Real; the Real Is the True

A monk asked, “Before the flower of awakening has blossomed, how can one discern the true and the real?”

The Master said, “It has already blossomed.”

The monk said, “I do not know whether it is true or real.”

The Master said, “The true is the real; the real is the true.” (430) This Fellow Who Betrays Grace and Spurns Virtue

A monk asked, “Is there anyone who does not repay the four benefactions and the three virtues?”

The Master said, “There is.”

The monk said, “Who is that?”

The Master said, “This fellow who betrays grace and spurns virtue.” (431) Nothing Is Lacking

A monk asked, “When a poor son comes, what should be given to him?”

The Master said, “Nothing is lacking.” (432) This Old Monk Is Congshen

A monk asked, “Who is the true master of Zhaozhou?”

The Master said, “This old monk is Congshen.” (433) May the Old Woman Remain Forever Immersed in the Sea of Suffering

An old woman asked, “I possess the body of the five obstacles. How may I be freed from them?”

The Master said, “May all people be born in heaven; may the old woman remain forever immersed in the sea of suffering.” (434) Come and Meet Me When the Moon

Has Set

A monk asked, “What is it when the bright moon hangs in the sky?”

The Master said, “You are still a man below the steps.”

The monk said, “I beg the Master to receive me up the steps.”

The Master said, “When the moon has set, come see me.” (435) Even now, I am thoroughly full.

At times the Master addressed the assembly, saying, “When this old monk first arrived at Yaoshan, he obtained a single phrase, and even now he is thoroughly full.” (436) When people of the highest rank come, receive them while remaining on the Chan seat.

While the Master was sitting in meditation in his room, the monastic administrator reported to him, “Your Reverence, the king has come to pay his respects.”

After the king had paid his respects, his attendants asked, “Why did you not rise when the lord of a feudal domain came?”

The Master said, “You do not understand. Here, when people of the lowest rank come, I go out through the three gates to receive them. When people of middling rank come, I step down from the Chan seat to receive them. When people of the highest rank come, I receive them while remaining on the Chan seat. One must not call the king a person of middling or low rank, lest that slight the king.”

The king was delighted and repeatedly invited him inside to make offerings. (437) Have you ever dreamed of Linji?

The Master asked Layman Zhou, “Have you ever dreamed of Linji?”

The layman raised his fist.

The Master said, “You saw him over there.”

The layman said, “I saw him over here.”

The Master said, “Where did you see Linji?”

The layman had no reply.

The Master asked, “Where has Layman Zhou come from?”

He said, “Neither coming nor going.”

The Master said, “Are you not a crow, flying here and there?” (438) In the south, many people lose their very lives.

The Master addressed the assembly, saying, “As soon as there is right and wrong, the mind is thrown into confusion. Is there still any room for an answer?”

Later, a monk related this to Luopu. Luopu clicked his teeth.

He also related it to Yunju. Yunju said, “Why must it be so?”

The monk related it to the Master, who said, “In the south, many people lose their very lives.”

The monk said, “Please, Reverend, give an example.”

As soon as the Master began to give one, the monk pointed to a monk beside him and said, “This monk has finished eating; why is he talking like that?”

The Master let it drop. (439) I cannot even attend to the sūtra myself.

While the Master was reading the Diamond Sūtra, a monk asked, “All Buddhas and the unsurpassed enlightenment of all Buddhas issue from this sūtra. What is this sūtra?”

The Master said, “The Diamond Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra: Thus have I heard. At one time, the Buddha was staying in Śrāvastī…”

The monk said, “That is not it.”

The Master said, “Can I not even attend to the sūtra myself?!” (440) How would you see it?

When a monk was taking leave, the Master said, “Venerable, when you go out, someone may suddenly ask, ‘Have you seen Zhaozhou?’ How would you answer?”

The monk said, “I could only say that I have.”

The Master said, “This old monk is a donkey. How would you see him?”

The monk had nothing to say. (441) Do you know of the Zhaozhou barrier?

The Master asked a newcomer, “Where have you come from?”

He said, “I have come from the south.”

The Master said, “Do you know of the Zhaozhou barrier?”

He said, “One must know that there are those who do not pass through the barrier.”

The Master rebuked him, saying, “You fellow who traffics in illicit salt!”

He also said, “Brothers, the Zhaozhou barrier is hard to pass.”

Someone asked, “What is the Zhaozhou barrier?”

The Master said, “It is the stone bridge.” (442) The Buddhadharma is all in the south.

A monk came from Xuefeng. The Master said, “Venerable, do not stay here. This old monk’s place is merely a refuge from calamity; the Buddhadharma is all in the south.”

The monk said, “Can the Buddhadharma have north and south?”

The Master said, “Even if you have come from Yunju or Xuefeng, you are still only a fellow carrying a plank!”

The monk said, “I have not yet understood: what are things like over there?”

The Master said, “Why did you wet the bed last night?”

The monk said, “What about after realization?”

The Master said, “Then you are shitting again.”

[A fellow carrying a plank: a dull, inflexible person.] (443) A lion cub is hard to find.

The Master addressed the assembly, saying, “Here I have lions that have come out of their dens, and lions that remain in their dens; but lion cubs are hard to find.”

At that time, a monk snapped his fingers in reply. The Master said, “What is that?”

The monk said, “A lion cub.”

The Master said, “When I call it a lion cub, that is already a fault; yet you go further and prance about.” (444) Send him a shovel.

The Master asked a newcomer, “Where have you left from?”

He said, “I left Xuefeng.”

The Master said, “What sayings does Xuefeng have to show people?”

He said, “The Reverend usually says, ‘The entire world in the ten directions is a single eye of a śramaṇa. Where then do all of you shit?’”

The Master said, “When you return, send him a shovel.” (445) What will you use?

As the Master was distributing clothing to the assembly, a monk asked, “Reverend, having given everything away, what will you use?”

The Master called out, “Son of Huzhou!”

The monk responded.

The Master said, “What will you use!” (446) The four great elements and five aggregates.

The Master addressed the assembly, saying, “Before the world existed, this nature already existed; when the world is destroyed, this nature is not destroyed.”

A monk asked, “What is this nature?”

The Master said, “The five aggregates and four great elements.”

The monk said, “These still perish. What, then, is this nature?”

The Master said, “The four great elements and five aggregates.” (447) All this belongs to the sūtras and treatises; the Buddhadharma is not there yet.

A lecturer from Dingzhou arrived. The Master asked, “What discipline do you study?”

He said, “I expound the sūtras, Vinaya, and treatises without first listening to lectures on them.”

The Master raised his hand to show him and said, “Can you expound this?”

The lecturer was utterly at a loss.

The Master said, “Even if you can expound them without first listening to lectures, you are still only a lecturer on sūtras and treatises. As for the Buddhadharma, it is not there yet.”

He said, “Are the Reverend’s words right now not the Buddhadharma?”

The Master said, “Even if you can ask and answer, it all belongs to the sūtras and treatises; the Buddhadharma is not there yet.”

The lecturer had nothing to say. (448) How does that monastery compare with this one?

The Master asked an attendant, “Where have you come from?”

He said, “I have come from the northern monastery.”

The Master said, “How does that monastery compare with this one?”

The attendant had no reply.

A monk was standing nearby, and the Master told him to answer on the attendant’s behalf.

The monk answered for him, “I came from that monastery.”

The Master laughed at this.

The Master then told Wenyuan to answer on his behalf. Wenyuan said, “The attendant simply does not accept the Master’s words.” (449) Eat my spit and snot.

The Master asked a lecturer, “What discipline do you study?”

He said, “I lecture on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra.”

The Master said, “The Vimalakīrti Sūtra says, ‘Every step is a place of practice.’ Where are you?”

The lecturer had no reply.

The Master told Quanyi to answer for the lecturer. Quanyi said, “With this one question alone, can you recognize the place of practice?”

The Master said, “Your body is within the place of practice; where is your mind? Speak quickly!”

He said, “Reverend, you are not seeking the student’s mind.”

The Master said, “That is so.”

He said, “What is this one question and one answer?”

The Master said, “This old monk does not abide among the mental factors; dharmas pass through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and are then understood.”

He said, “If you do not abide among the mental factors, why do you seek?”

The Master said, “Because you cannot express it.”

He said, “If dharmas pass through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind without being understood, why can you not express it?”

The Master said, “Eat my spit and snot.” (450) Do not take this old monk’s words.

The Master asked a monk, “Have you ever read the Lotus Sūtra?”

He said, “I have.”

The Master said, “The sūtra says, ‘Wearing a patched robe and dwelling in a secluded place, they falsely call themselves āraṇyakas and deceive the people of the world.’ How do you understand this?”

The monk made as if to bow.

The Master said, “Did you come wearing a patched robe?”

He said, “I did.”

The Master said, “Do not deceive me.”

The monk said, “How can I cease to be deceived?”

The Master said, “Make your own living; do not take this old monk’s words.” (451) Why then do you pass on words for your descendants?

The Master asked a lecturer, “What discipline do you study?”

He said, “I lecture on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra.”

The Master said, “Who is Vimalakīrti’s grandfather?”

He said, “I am.”

The Master said, “Why, then, convey words for your descendants?”

The host had no reply. (452) Today Is Overcast; No Answering Questions

One day, the Master ascended the Dharma hall. As soon as a monk came forward and bowed, the Master joined his palms and said farewell.

On another day, a monk bowed.

The Master said, “Ask well.”

The monk said, “What is Chan?”

The Master said, “Today is overcast; I will not answer questions.” (453) Great Indeed, From No Direction

The Master asked a newly arrived monk, “From what direction have you come?”

The monk said, “I have come from no direction.”

The Master turned his back.

The monk followed the Master's turn with his sitting cloth.

The Master said, "Great indeed, from no direction." (454) Picking Willow Catkins, Picking Willow Catkins

The Master asked a newly arrived monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "I have come from the south."

The Master said, "When you meet someone three thousand li away, do not trifle!"

The monk said, "I have not."

The Master said, "Picking willow catkins, picking willow catkins."

[In fascicle 18 of The Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall, under "Chan Master Zhaozhou": "When a monk took leave, the Master asked, 'Where are you going?' The monk replied, 'I am going south.' The Master said, 'When you meet someone three thousand li away, do not rejoice.' The monk said, 'This student does not understand.' The Master said, 'Willow floss! Willow floss!'"] (455) Mañjuśrī, Mañjuśrī

Fenggan arrived at Mount Wutai and saw an old man at the foot of the mountain.

Fenggan said, "Could you be Mañjuśrī?"

The old man said, "There cannot be two Mañjuśrīs!"

Fenggan thereupon bowed, and the old man disappeared.

A monk recounted this to the Master, who said, "Fenggan had only one eye."

The Master then had Wenyuan play the old man, while he himself played Fenggan.

The Master said, "Could you be Mañjuśrī?"

Wenyuan said, "How could there be two Mañjuśrīs?"

The Master said, "Mañjuśrī, Mañjuśrī." (456) Go Have Some Tea

The Master asked two newly arrived monks, "Venerable, have you ever been here before?"

One said, "I have not been here before."

The Master said, "Go have some tea."

He then asked the other one, “Have you ever been here before?”

The monk said, “I have been here before.”

The Master said, “Go have some tea.”

The monastery steward asked, “Master, let us leave aside your telling one who had not been here before to go have tea. Why did you tell one who had been here before to go have tea as well?”

The Master said, “Steward.”

The steward responded.

The Master said, “Go have some tea!” (457) You May Dwell There Yourself

The Master went to Yunju. Yunju said, “You are quite advanced in years; why do you not find a place to dwell?”

The Master said, “Where could I dwell?”

Yunju said, “There is the foundation of an old monastery up ahead.”

The Master said, “In that case, Reverend, you may dwell there yourself.” (458) Today I Was Kicked by a Donkey

The Master also went to Zhuyu. Zhuyu said, “You are quite advanced in years; why do you not go and find a place to dwell?”

The Master said, “Where could I dwell?”

Zhuyu said, “You are quite advanced in years, yet you do not even recognize a place to dwell!”

The Master said, “For thirty years I have handled horses, but today I was kicked by a donkey.” (459) Only Because the Mind Is Coarse

The Master again went to Zhuyu’s abbot’s quarters and looked about above and below.

Zhuyu said, “Why stumble on level ground?”

The Master said, “Only because the mind is coarse.”

[Jiao: a fall] (460) Zhaozhou Probes the Water

One day, carrying his staff, the Master went up to Zhuyu's Dharma hall and paced back and forth.

Zhuyu said, "What are you doing?"

The Master said, "Sounding the water!"

Zhuyu said, "There is not even a drop here. What water are you sounding?"

The Master leaned his staff against the wall and went down. (461) Zhaozhou Tests the Old Woman

On the road to Mount Wutai there was an old woman who would question monks.

A monk asked, "Which way is the road to Mount Wutai?"

She said, "Go straight ahead!"

As soon as the monk set out, the old woman said, "There goes another one like that!"

After hearing of this, the Master went and asked, "Which way is the road to Mount Wutai?"

She said, "Go straight ahead!"

As soon as the Master set out, the old woman said, "There goes another one like that!"

When the Master returned, he told the assembly, "Today this old monk has seen through the old woman." (462) It Is Not Much Different

When the Master saw a monk arrive, he held up a burning coal in tongs and showed it to him, saying, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "I do not understand."

The Master said, "You must not call it fire; this old monk has already said it."

The Master picked up the burning coal with the tongs and said, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "I do not understand."

The Master then said, "At Touzi Mountain in Shuzhou there is a master. Go bow to him and ask. If your conditions accord, there will be no need to return; if they do not accord, then return." The monk then went.

As soon as he arrived at Master Touzi's place, Touzi asked, "Where have you recently come from?"

The monk said, "I have come from Zhaozhou especially to bow to you, Master."

Touzi said, "What words did the elder Zhaozhou have?"

The monk fully recounted the preceding exchange.

Touzi then got down from the Chan couch, walked three or five paces, and sat down again, saying, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "I do not understand!"

Touzi said, "Return and recount this to Zhaozhou."

The monk returned and recounted it to the Master, who said, "Do you understand?"

The monk said, "I still do not understand."

The Master said, "It is not much different either."

["It is not much different either"; The Compendium of the Five Lamps reads: "Touzi's way is not much different either."] (463) If He Assents, He Does Not Violate

Dongshan asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, "I have come from having my shoes mended."

Dongshan said, "Did you mend them yourself, or did you rely on another?"

The monk said, "I relied on another."

Dongshan said, "Did that other person point to you, Venerable?"

The monk had no reply.

The Master spoke on his behalf: "If he assents, he does not violate." (464) Simply Give Him Proper Fodder

Puhua was eating raw vegetables when Linji saw him and said, "Puhua is very much like a donkey."

Puhua immediately brayed like a donkey, and Linji simply left.

Puhua said, "That little fellow Linji has only one eye."

The Master spoke on his behalf: “Simply give him proper fodder.” (465) For Now, Stitch This One Seam

Baoshou asked Hu Dingjiao, “Are you Hu Dingjiao?”

He said, “I would not dare claim that.”

Baoshou said, “Can you stitch up empty space?”

He said, “Please break empty space open and bring it here!”

Baoshou struck him and then said, “Later there will be many-mouthed masters who will point this out for you.”

Later, Hu Dingjiao recounted this to the Master, who said, “Why did he strike you?”

He said, “I do not know where my fault lay.”

The Master said, “You still cannot manage even this one seam, yet you would have him break it open!”

Dingjiao then understood.

The Master also said, “For now, stitch this one seam.” (466) Zhaozhou’s East Courtyard West

While traveling, the Master encountered an old woman who asked, “Where does the Reverend live?”

The Master said, “West of Zhaozhou’s East Courtyard.”

The Master raised this with the monks, saying, “Tell me, which character xi did he use?”

One monk said, “The xi in east and west.”

Another monk said, “The xi in yīqī, ‘to rely and roost.’”

The Master said, “The two of you could both serve as Commissioners of Salt and Iron.” (467) This Old Monk Likes Killing

The Master was strolling in a garden with a vice minister when they saw a rabbit run past. The vice minister asked, “Reverend, you are a great spiritual friend. Why does the rabbit run away when it sees you?”

The Master said, “This old monk likes killing.” (468) Who Is the One Who Removes Dust?

Seeing a monk sweeping the ground, the Master asked, “Can sweeping like this make it clean?”

The monk said, “The more I sweep, the more there is.”

The Master said, “Is there not one who removes dust?”

The monk said, “Who is the one who removes dust?”

The Master said, “Do you understand?”

The monk said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “Go ask Yunju.”

The monk then went and asked Yunju, “What is one who brushes away the dust?”

Yunju said, “You blind fellow.” (469) Seeing [me] among the fodder

The Master asked a monk, “How long have you been here?”

The monk said, “Seven or eight years.”

The Master said, “Have you seen this old monk?”

The monk said, “I have.”

The Master said, “If I became a donkey, how would you see me?”

The monk said, “I would see you within the dharma realm.”

The Master said, “I thought you had this move, but you have eaten so much food for nothing!”

The monk said, “Please speak, Master.”

The Master said, “Why did you not say, ‘I see you among the fodder’?” (470) Few know gratitude

The Master asked the vegetable steward, “Today, are you eating raw vegetables or cooked vegetables?”

The vegetable steward lifted up a stalk of vegetables. The Master said, “Few know gratitude; many repay kindness with ingratitude.”

[The Compendium of the Five Lamps has: “The vegetable steward picked up some vegetables and presented them.”] (471) Already beforehand

A lay practitioner came to the monastery to burn incense.

The Master asked a monk, “He is there burning incense and making prostrations, while you and I are here speaking together. At just this moment, on which side does life arise?”

The monk said, “What is the Master?”

The Master said, “Just so—it is on that side.”

The monk said, “Just so, it is already beforehand.”

The Master laughed at him. (472) Bring the flatbread

The Master and his junior disciple Wenyuan debated the meaning of teachings. Neither could claim victory; whoever won was to lose a flatbread.

The Master said, “I am a donkey.”

Wenyuan said, “I am a donkey’s stomach.”

The Master said, “I am donkey dung.”

Wenyuan said, “I am a worm in the dung.”

The Master said, “What are you doing in there?”

Wenyuan said, “I am spending the summer in there.”

The Master said, “Bring the flatbread.”

[Chapter 18, “Master Zhaozhou,” of the Anthology of the Patriarchal Hall states: One day, the Master said to a seven-year-old boy: “This old monk has been contriving in his mind all day and would like to debate the meaning of teachings with you. If you lose, buy a flatbread for this old monk; if this old monk loses, this old monk will buy a flatbread for you.” The boy said, “Please, Master, set forth the proposition.”

The Master said, “Take inferiority as the principle; do not contend for superiority. This old monk is a donkey.” The boy said, “I am donkey dung.” The Master said, “Then you must buy a flatbread for me.” The boy said, “No, Master; the Master must buy a flatbread for me.” The Master and the disciple argued, but could not settle the matter.

The Master said, “This matter is like an affair of state and army: if the magistrate cannot decide it, he must call the village elder to judge. There are some three hundred people here; surely there is someone among them. Everyone, decide for

this old monk: between host and guest, which side has the way through?" The assembly could not decide. The Master said, "It takes a Chan master with discerning eyes." Three days later, the novice Juecha bought flatbread and offered it to the Master.] (473) Neither ascends to heaven nor enters the earth

As the Master was returning from the inner quarters, he saw on the road a banner with one section missing. A monk asked, "Did that section of the banner go up to heaven, or down into the earth?"

The Master said, "It neither ascends to heaven nor enters the earth."

The monk said, "Where did it go?"

The Master said, "It fell down." (474) Take care

As the Master was sitting, a monk had barely come forward to bow when the Master said, "Take care."

As the monk was about to ask a question, the Master said, "There it is again." (475) The wind blows it into another melody

As the Master was standing beneath the eaves, he saw swallows chirping. The Master said, "These swallows chatter away, inviting people to speak."

A monk asked, "May I ask whether they appreciate it?"

The Master said, "It vaguely resembles a tune just fit to hear, but the wind has blown it into another melody." (476) Where will you take refuge?

A monk was taking leave. The Master said, "Where are you going?"

The monk said, "To Fujian."

The Master said, "There are many troops in Fujian. You should avoid them."

The monk said, "Where should I avoid them?"

The Master said, "Just right." (477) Do not say that this old monk did not receive you

When a monk came to pay respects, he saw the Master seated with his patched robe covering his head, and so he withdrew.

The Master said, "Venerable, do not say that this old monk did not receive you." (478) Return my companion to me

The Master asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"

The monk said, “From the south.”

The Master said, “Whom did you have as a companion?”

The monk said, “A water buffalo.”

The Master said, “You are a fine monastic. Why keep company with an animal?”

The monk said, “Because there is no difference.”

The Master said, “What a fine animal!”

The monk said, “How could I consent to that?”

The Master said, “Whether you consent or not, return my companion to me.” (479) Is there still a patriarch in the hall?

The Master asked a monk, “Is there still a patriarch in the hall?”

The monk said, “There is.”

The Master said, “Call him to wash this old monk’s feet.” (480) Incense of precepts? Incense of samādhi?

There were two monks in the hall, each yielding to the other and refusing to be head seat. The monastery steward reported this to the Master, who said, “Have them both be second seat.”

The steward said, “Whom shall we make first seat?”

The Master said, “Set up incense.”

The steward said, “The incense has been set up.”

The Master said, “Incense of precepts, or incense of samādhi?” (481) Did you pass through Tong Pass?

The Master asked a monk, “Where have you departed from?”

The monk said, “I departed from the capital.”

The Master said, “Did you pass through Tong Pass?”

The monk said, “I did not.”

The Master said, “Today I have caught a fellow smuggling salt.” (482) This dead fellow

While seeing off a deceased monk, the Master said, “It is only one dead man, yet countless people see him off.”

He also said, “So many dead fellows are seeing off one living man.”

At that time a monk asked, “Is it the mind that is born, or the body that is born?”

The Master said, “Neither body nor mind is born.”

The monk said, “What is this?”

The Master said, “Dead fellow.” (483) It is you who call it a cat

Seeing a cat, a monk asked, “I call it a cat. What does the Master call it?”

The Master said, “It is you who call it a cat.” (484) And you say that the prince has arrived

When the prince of Zhenzhou came to visit the Master, an attendant reported, “The prince has come.”

The Master said, “May the prince enjoy every blessing.”

The attendant said, “He is not here yet; he has only arrived at the gate.”

The Master said, “And you say that the prince has arrived.” (485) In the privy, one cannot speak Dharma with you

While in the privy, the Master called Wenyuan, who answered.

The Master said, “In the privy, one cannot speak Dharma with you.” (486) What fine merit in this hall

As the Master was passing through the hall, he called the attendant, who answered.

The Master said, “What fine merit in this hall.”

The attendant had no reply. (487) Today I wrongly added a footnote for someone

When the Master arrived at Linji’s place, Linji was just washing his feet. Linji immediately asked, “What was the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the west?”

The Master said, “Just when I am washing my feet.”

Linji drew near and listened attentively. The Master said, “If you understand, then understand; if you do not understand, do not keep pecking at it. What then?”

Linji shook his sleeves and departed. The Master said, “After thirty years of traveling on foot, today I wrongly added a footnote for someone.” (488) Meeting Hanshan and Shide

When the Master arrived at Guoqing Monastery on Mount Tiantai, he met Hanshan and Shide. The Master said, “Long have I heard of Hanshan and Shide, but on arriving I see only two water buffaloes.”

Hanshan and Shide then acted out two buffaloes butting one another. The Master said, “Shoo! Shoo!”

Hanshan and Shide bared their teeth and looked at one another. The Master then returned to the hall.

The two entered the hall and asked the Master, “What was the point of that exchange just now?”

The Master burst into hearty laughter. (489) Why did they become five hundred water buffaloes?

One day, the two asked the Master, “Where have you been?”

The Master said, “I have been paying respects to the five hundred venerable ones.”

The two said, “The five hundred venerable ones—are they five hundred water buffaloes?”

The Master said, “Why did they become five hundred water buffaloes?”

Hanshan said, “Heaven! Heaven!”

The Master burst into hearty laughter.

[Nie, pronounced nǐ: equivalent to "ne" or "li," a sentence-final particle] (490) He Is Someone Else’s Man or Woman

While the Master was traveling on pilgrimage, he saw two hermitage masters. One had made himself up as a child with hair in two buns. The Master greeted them, but neither paid him any attention. The next morning, the child with two buns brought a pot of rice, set it on the ground, and divided it into three portions. The hermitage master moved his mat forward and sat down. The child likewise moved his mat forward and sat facing him, without inviting the Master. The Master then moved his mat forward and sat down as well.

The child glanced at the Master. The hermitage master said, “Do not say that you rose too early; there are still those who travel by night.”

The Master said, “Why not instruct this practitioner?”

The hermitage master said, “He is someone else’s man or woman.”

The Master said, “I should have let it pass.”

The child immediately rose, looked at the hermitage master, and said, “Why are you so talkative?”

From then on, the child entered the mountains and was not seen again. (491) Amitābha Buddha!

While the Master was reading a sūtra, the novice Wenyuan came in. The Master turned the sūtra sideways and showed it to him. The novice then went out. The Master followed, seized him, and said, “Speak quickly! Speak quickly!”

Wenyuan said, “Amitābha Buddha! Amitābha Buddha!”

The Master then returned to the abbot’s quarters. (492) The Attendant Is Outside the Gate

When a novice postulant came to pay his respects, the Master said to the attendant, “Tell him to leave.”

The attendant said to the postulant, “The Venerable instructs you to leave.”

The postulant then took his leave.

The Master said, “A novice postulant may enter the gate, while the attendant remains outside it.” (493) The Master Tests Venerable Elders

While the Master was traveling on pilgrimage, he came to the monastery of a venerable elder. As soon as they met at the gate, he asked, “Is there? Is there?”

The venerable elder raised his fist. The Master said, “The water is too shallow for a boat to moor,” and left.

He then came to another monastery and, upon seeing its venerable elder, asked, “Is there? Is there?”

The venerable elder raised his fist. The Master said, “He can release and seize, take and gather.” He bowed and departed.

[Venerable elder: an aged and renowned eminent monk.] (494) Do You Not See Silla and Great Tang?

One day, holding up a rosary, the Master asked an elder from Silla, “Is there one like this over there?”

The elder said, “There is.”

The Master said, “How does it compare with this one?”

The elder said, “It is not like this one.”

The Master said, “Since there is one, why is it not like this one?”

The elder had no reply.

The Master answered on his behalf, “Do you not see Silla and Great Tang?” (495) May You Be Well in All Your Movements and Repose

The Master asked a newly arrived monk, “Where have you come from?”

The monk said, “I have come from the south.”

The Master raised a finger and said, “Do you understand?”

The monk said, “I do not understand.”

The Master said, “May you be well in all your movements and repose—don’t you understand?” (496) What Is Prajñā’s Essence?

While the Master was traveling on pilgrimage, he asked Daci, “What is prajñā’s essence?”

Daci said, “What is prajñā’s essence?”

The Master burst into hearty laughter and left.

The next day, Daci saw the Master sweeping the ground and asked, “What is prajñā’s essence?”

The Master put down his broom, burst into hearty laughter, and departed.

Daci then returned to the abbot’s quarters. (497) He Quietly Departs

The Master came to Baizhang. Baizhang asked, “Where have you come from?”

He said, “I have come from Nanquan.”

Baizhang said, “What sayings does Nanquan use to instruct people?”

The Master said, “At times he says, ‘Even one who has not attained it must quietly depart.’”

Baizhang shouted at him.

The Master looked startled.

Baizhang said, “How well you have quietly departed!”

The Master danced and left.

[Qiaoran: quietly; without making a sound] (498) The Master Arrives at Touzi

The Master came to Touzi, and they sat facing one another for a meal.

Touzi gave the Master a steamed bun to eat.

The Master said, “I will not eat it.”

Before long, flatbreads were served. Touzi told a novice to pass one to the Master. After receiving it, the Master bowed three times to the novice. Touzi remained silent. (499) A Monk Paints the Master’s Portrait

When a monk painted a portrait of the Master and presented it to him, the Master said, “If it resembles this old monk, then kill me. If it does not resemble me, then burn it.” (500) The Travel Permit Is in Order

As the Master was walking with Wenyuan, he pointed to a patch of ground and said, “This would be a fine place to build a patrol post.”

Wenyuan went over there, stood there, and said, “Bring out your travel permit.”

The Master slapped him.

Wenyuan said, “The travel permit is in order. Pass!”

[Travel permit: a document issued by the government.] (501) If One Has Not Seen Geese Amid the Clouds, How Can One Know the Cold of the Desert?

The Master asked a newly arrived monk, “Where have you recently come from?”

The monk said, “Mount Wutai.”

The Master said, “Did you see Mañjuśrī?”

The monk spread out his hands.

The Master said, “You spread out your hands so freely, yet Mañjuśrī is difficult to see?”

The monk said, “Merely guarding the breath makes one desperately anxious.”

The Master said, “If one has not seen geese amid the clouds, how can one know the cold of the desert?” (502) Why Did One in Sun Bin’s School Drill a Tortoise Shell?

A monk asked, “I have come from afar to seek instruction from you. Please receive me.”

The Master said, “Why did one in Sun Bin’s school drill a tortoise shell?”

The monk flicked his sleeves and left.

The Master said, “I thought he would attain glory, but instead both his legs were broken.”

[Drilling a tortoise shell: an ancient method of divination.] (503) When Asked Where to Begin, He Does Not Know

The Master and the head monk were looking at a stone bridge. The Master asked him, “Who built it?”

The head monk said, “Li Ying built it.”

The Master said, “Where did he begin when he built it?”

The head monk had no reply.

The Master said, “You ordinarily speak of the stone bridge, but when asked where construction began, you do not know.” (504) I Am Separated from You by the Sea

A monastery superintendent from Silla invited the Master for a meal. When the Master arrived at the gate, he asked, “What monastery is this?”

The superintendent said, “Silla Monastery.”

The Master said, “I am separated from you by the sea.” (505) Nine Times Nine Is Eighty-One

The Master asked a monk, “Where have you come from?”

The monk said, “I have come from Yunjü.”

The Master said, “What sayings does Yunjü have?”

The monk said, “A monk asked, ‘What is it like when the antelope hangs its horns?’ Yunjü said, ‘Six times six is thirty-six.’”

The Master said, “Senior Brother Yunjü is still there.”

The monk then asked, “What is the Venerable’s meaning?”

The Master said, “Nine times nine is eighty-one.” (506) What Place Is This?

One evening, an old woman entered the monastery. The Master asked, “What are you doing?”

The old woman said, “I am seeking lodging.”

The Master said, “What place is this?”

The old woman burst into hearty laughter and left. (507) The Old Woman Steals Zhaozhou’s Bamboo Shoots

When the Master was out walking, he encountered an old woman carrying a basket. He asked, “Where are you going?”

She said, “I am going to steal Zhaozhou’s bamboo shoots.”

The Master said, “What will you do if you suddenly see Zhaozhou?”

The old woman came close and slapped him. (508) Because I Have a Killing Mind

The Master saw the monastery superintendent bringing out food for living beings. When the crows saw him, they all flew away.

The Master said, “Why do the little crows fly away when they see you?”

The superintendent said, “They are afraid of me.”

The Master said, “What sort of words are those?”

The Master answered on his behalf, “Because I have a killing mind.” (509) Where Is Zhaozhou Located?

The Master asked a monk, “Where have you come from?”

The monk said, “I have come from Jiangxi.”

The Master said, “Where is Zhaozhou located?”

The monk had no reply. (510) Better No Good Deed Than One

As the Master passed through the hall, he saw a monk bowing. The Master struck him with his staff and said, “Bowing is also a good deed.”

The Master said, “Better no good deed than one.” (511) You Want to Rebel

When the Master visited Tongguan, Tongguan asked him, “Do you know that there is a Tongguan?”

The Master said, “I know that there is a Tongguan.”

Tongguan said, “Those with travel permits may pass; those without travel permits may not pass.”

The Master said, “What if the imperial carriage should arrive?”

Guan said, “You must examine yourself as well.”

[He] said, “You want to rebel!” (512) The Master Arrives at Baoshou

When the Master arrived at Baoshou, Baoshou saw him coming and turned his back to sit facing away. The Master then spread out his sitting cloth. Baoshou rose to his feet, and the Master left. (513) Leading an Ox Through the Monks’ Hall

When the Master was at Nanquan, Nanquan led a water buffalo into the monks’ hall and made a circuit through it.

The head monk gave the ox three pats on its back, whereupon Nanquan stopped and left.

Later, the Master placed a bundle of grass before the head monk, who had no reply. (514) “The Venerable Is an Ancient Buddha”

A scholar, upon seeing the Master, praised him, saying, “The Venerable is an ancient Buddha.”

The Master said, “The scholar is a new Tathāgata.” (515) Teng Teng, Person of the Great Way: Before Him Is the Gate of Nirvāṇa

A monk asked, “What is nirvāṇa?”

The Master said, “My hearing is weak.”

When the monk asked again, the Master said, “It is not that I suffer from deafness.”

He then composed a verse:

Teng Teng, person of the Great Way—before him is the gate of nirvāṇa.

Simply sit, with thoughts boundless; next year spring will come again. (516) Birth and Death: Same or Different

A monk asked, “Are the two paths of birth and death the same or different?”

The Master then composed a verse:

A person of the Way asks about birth and death—how can birth and death be discussed?

A pool at Shuanglin; the bright moon illumines heaven and earth.

To recognize it merely in the words is to toy with the vital spirit.

If you wish to understand birth and death, a madman speaks of spring in a dream. (517) Where to Hide Oneself

A monk asked, “When the Buddhas are in difficulty, they hide themselves in the flames. When the Venerable is in difficulty, where do you hide yourself?”

The Master then composed a verse:

He says that the Buddha is in difficulty; I say that he has met disaster.

Just see where I flee from danger—where is there anything that follows me?

Being and nonbeing are not to be spoken of; coming and going are not truly coming and going.

For your sake I speak the Dharma of difficulty; recognize it directly before you. (518) A Verse on Seeing a Stūpa Being Built

On seeing a stūpa being built, he composed a verse:

Originally complete and perfect—why trouble to pile up stones?

Names and carved inscriptions are far removed from me.

If someone should ask, I shall never point it out or depict it. (519) A Verse on Seeing Divergent Views

Seeing that views in various places followed divergent paths, he composed a verse:

South of Zhaozhou, north of the stone bridge, Maitreya is in the Guanyin Monastery.

The Patriarch left behind a single sandal; even to this day it cannot be found. (520) A Verse on the Wooden Fish

On account of a wooden fish, he composed a verse:

The four great elements still owe their formation to the work of transformation; for there to be sound, the inside must be empty.

Do not fault me for not speaking of this to ordinary people; it is only because our musical modes differ. (521) A Verse on the Lotus

On account of a lotus, he composed a verse:

Its strange and wondrous roots and shoots are fresh with snow; who knows in what age they parted from the Western Heaven?

No one knows the depth of the mud; only when it emerges from the water does one know it is a white lotus. (522) Song of the Twelve Hours

At cockcrow, the hour of Chou: sorrowful to rise, with troubles still abounding. There is not even a skirt or a short robe; only the faint semblance of a kāṣāya remains. My trousers have no waistband, my pants no opening, and on my head are three or five pecks of bluish ash. I had hoped that cultivation would benefit people, but who knew I would become such a wretched fellow?

At dawn, the hour of Yin: this desolate village and ruined monastery are truly beyond description. Not a grain of rice remains for the morning gruel; I face an idle window and motes in the cracks. Only sparrows clamour, with no one near; sitting alone, I often hear falling leaves. Who says that, upon leaving home, love and hatred are cut off? As I reflect, tears unconsciously soak my scarf.

At sunrise, the hour of Mao: purity has instead turned into affliction. Merits from conditioned deeds are covered by dust, and vast fields have never been swept. There is much furrowing of the brow and little that pleases the heart. That intolerable old Black-Yellow from the eastern village brings no offerings, yet lets his donkey eat the grass before my hall.

At mealtime, the hour of Chen: in vain I watch the smoke of cooking fires from the four neighboring villages. Steamed buns and dumplings parted from me years ago; today, thinking of them, I can only swallow my saliva. Recitation is scant, sighing frequent; among a hundred households, not one is kind. Those who come say only that they seek tea; if they get none, they gulp and leave in anger.

At midmorning, the hour of Si: who would have known that shaving my head would come to this? For no reason I am invited to serve as a village monk, humiliated and starving, suffering almost to death. Old Hu Zhangsan and Black Li Si have never shown the least respect. They have just suddenly arrived at the door, saying only that they wish to borrow tea and paper.

At noon, the hour of Wu: there is no regular order to tea and meals. I leave the southern household for the northern one, yet when I reach the north, no meal is served. Bitter coarse salt, vinegar of barley malt, millet rice, scallions, and lettuce—they call it an offering beyond compare, saying, “Venerable, your resolve for the Way must be firm.”

In the afternoon, the hour of Wei: this time I have not wasted the ground of time. I once heard that one full meal makes one forget a hundred hungers; today this old monk’s body proves it. I do not practice Chan or discuss doctrine, but spread a tattered mat and sleep through the day. I suppose that even in the Tuṣita Heaven above, there is no such sun warming one’s back.

At dusk, the hour of Shen: there are also people who burn incense and make prostrations. Five old women and three with goiters, with one pair of faces black and wrinkled. Sesame-oil tea is truly a treasure; no need for strenuous exertion like Vajra. “May silkworms and wheat ripen next year; give little Rāhula a coin.”

At sunset, the hour of You: apart from desolation, what is there to keep? Lofty wandering monks are surely nowhere to be found, while novice monks who roam from monastery to monastery are always plentiful. Extraordinary words do not pass their lips; in vain they continue the descendants of Śākyamuni. A single staff of rough thornwood serves not only for climbing mountains but also for beating dogs.

At twilight, the hour of Xu: alone I sit in an empty, dark room. I never encounter the lamp-light that shines like a mirage; before my eyes is nothing but pitch-black lacquer. No bell is heard, and the days are wasted; I hear only mice squeaking and scurrying. How could I still have the heart to think of reciting a pāramitā?

At nightfall, the hour of Hai: who loves the bright moon before the gate? Within, I only worry about the time to lie down: without even clothing, what can I wear for a covering? Liu the disciplinarian and Zhao of the Five Precepts speak most strangely of goodness. Though you mountain monks’ bags are utterly empty, whenever asked, you say that you know nothing at all.

At midnight, the hour of Zi: when have mind and circumstances ever paused even briefly? Thinking of monastics throughout the world, how many abbots can be like me? An earthen couch, a broken reed mat, an old elm-wood pillow, and no bedding at all. Before the sacred image no benzoin incense is burned; from the ashes comes only the smell of cow dung.

Chronicle of Chan Master Zhaozhou Zhenji

The Master was a disciple of Nanquan. His lay surname was Hao; he was originally from Hao Village in Caozhou, and his personal name was Congshen.

An inscription on a stūpa in Zhen Prefecture says: “Did the Master attain seven hundred jiazi? When King Wu was ‘Wei-mu,’ he fled to Julai, eating wood and grass and wearing monastic attire without change.”

At first, the Master accompanied his own teacher on pilgrimage to Nanquan. His teacher first completed the formal courtesies, and only then did the Master make his own. Nanquan was lying in his abbot’s quarters when he saw the Master come to pay his respects and asked, “Where have you come from recently?” The Master said, “Ruixiang Monastery.” Nanquan said, “Did you see the auspicious image?” The Master said, “I did not see an auspicious image; I saw only a reclining Tathāgata.”

Nanquan then rose and asked, “Are you a novice with a master, or a novice without a master?” The Master replied, “A novice with a master.” Nanquan said, “Who is your master?” The Master said, “Though early spring is still cold, I respectfully wish the Reverend good health in all your daily activities.” Nanquan then called the monastic steward and said, “Make separate arrangements for this novice.”

After receiving the precepts, the Master heard that his ordination teacher was residing at Huguo Monastery west of Caozhou, so he returned to the monastery to pay his respects. On his arrival, his teacher told the Hao family, “Your son, who has been wandering about, has returned.” His relatives were overjoyed and waited for the next day, when they would all go to see him. When the Master heard this, he said, “The dusty world’s net of attachment has no end. Having already left home, I do not wish to see them again.” That very night, he packed up and departed.

Thereafter, carrying his water bottle and staff, he traveled throughout the regions. He would often say of himself: “If a child of seven surpasses me, I will ask that child for instruction; if an old man of a hundred does not equal me, I will teach him.”

At the age of eighty, he finally took up residence at Guanyin Monastery east of the city of Zhaozhou, more than ten li from the Stone Bridge. His maintenance of the monastery was austere, and he aspired to emulate the ancients. The monks’ hall had neither front nor rear racks, and meals were prepared only as they were needed. One leg of his rope bed was broken, so he tied it up with rope and a burnt piece of firewood. Whenever anyone wished to make a new one, the Master would not permit it. During forty years as abbot, he never sent a single letter to inform his patrons.

A monk from the south once reported a dialogue: Someone asked Xuefeng, “What is it like when there is a cold spring in an ancient ravine?” Xuefeng said, “Stare with your eyes, and you cannot see its bottom.” The student said, “What about one who

drinks from it?" Xuefeng said, "It does not enter through the mouth." On hearing this, the Master said, "If it does not enter through the mouth, does it enter through the nostrils?" The monk then asked the Master, "What is it like when there is a cold spring in an ancient ravine?" The Master said, "Bitter!" The student said, "What about one who drinks from it?" The Master said, "Dead!" When Xuefeng heard these words of the Master, he praised him, saying, "An ancient Buddha! An ancient Buddha!" From then on, Xuefeng no longer answered questions.

Later, when the Prince of Yan in Hebei led troops to seize Zhen Prefecture, and had reached its borders, an observer of auspicious signs reported, "A sage resides in Zhaozhou. If we go to war, we will certainly not prevail." The two princes of Yan and Zhao therefore spread a banquet together and both ceased hostilities. They then asked, "Who is the eminent person in Zhao's golden land?" Someone said, "There is a master who lectures on the Avataṃsaka Sūtra, whose conduct and observance are lofty and solitary."

"Whenever there is a severe drought, everyone asks him to go to Mount Wutai to pray. Before the master has returned, sweet rain pours down." They said, "This may still not be the best." Someone else said, "One hundred and twenty li from here is Guanyin Monastery in Zhaozhou. There is a Chan master there, advanced in age and attainment, whose Dharma eye is clear." All said, "Could he fulfill the omen?"

The two princes halted their carriages and went to see him. When they arrived at the monastery, the Master remained seated and did not rise. The Prince of Yan then asked, "Which is more honored: a human king or a Dharma King?" The Master said, "Among human kings, the human king is honored; among Dharma Kings, the Dharma King is honored." The Prince of Yan assented. After a while, the Master asked, "Which one is the king of Zhen Prefecture?" The Prince of Zhao answered, "Your disciple." Because Zhaozhou belonged to Zhen Prefecture, this showed his respectful regard. The Master said, "This old monk unworthily dwells among these hills and rivers and has not been able to hasten to pay his respects."

After a short while, those attending them invited the Master to teach the Dharma for the prince. The Master said, "The prince has so many attendants about him—how can this old monk teach the Dharma?" They therefore arranged for the attendants to withdraw.

At that time, the novice Wenyuan, who was beside the Master, said loudly, "I inform Your Highness: these are not the attendants he means!" The prince then asked, "What attendants does he mean?" Wenyuan replied, "Your Highness has too many honorific names, and that is why the Reverend does not dare teach the Dharma!" The Prince of Yan then said, "I ask the Chan master to set aside the taboo names and teach the Dharma!" The Master said, "Thus we know that the retainers of Your

Highness in former kalpas were all enemies. When the name of our World-Honored Buddha is invoked even once, sins are extinguished and blessings arise." Whenever anyone so much as touched upon the names of the prince's ancestors, they would become angry. The Master tirelessly expounded the Dharma for a long time. The two princes bowed their heads in reverence and praised him, cherishing and respecting him without end.

The next day, as they were preparing to depart, the Prince of Yan sent an advance envoy. Hearing that the Master had not risen, the envoy entered the monastery at dawn and reproached him for behaving arrogantly toward the princes. On hearing this, the Master came out to greet him. The envoy asked, "Yesterday, when the two princes came, you did not rise. Today, when I have come, why have you risen to receive me?" The Master said, "When the commander is the equal of a prince, this old monk will likewise not rise to receive him!" On hearing these words, the envoy bowed repeatedly and departed.

Soon afterward, the Prince of Zhao sent an envoy to invite the Master to receive offerings. When he reached the city gate, the whole city, in full ceremonial array, welcomed him inside. As soon as the Master stepped down from the jeweled carriage, the prince made bows before him and invited him to ascend the hall and sit in the seat of honor. After a while, the Master struck his forehead with his hand and said, "What officials are those standing below the steps?" Those beside him said, "They are the venerable elders, masters, and great virtuous ones from the various monasteries." The Master said, "Each of them is a Dharma guide in one region. If they remain below the steps, this old monk will also rise." The prince then ordered them to ascend the hall.

That day, as the vegetarian banquet was about to end, the monastic officials lined up in order, from highest to lowest, each asking one question. When one person asked about the Buddhadharma, the Master looked at him and asked, "What are you doing?" He said, "I am asking about the Buddhadharma." The Master said, "This old monk is already seated here. Over there, what Dharma are you asking about? Two honored ones do not teach at the same time." The prince then ordered him to stop.

At that time, the queen was standing beside the prince in attendance. She said, "Please, Chan master, place your hand upon the prince's crown and confer a prediction upon him." The Master placed his hand on the prince's crown and said, "May Your Highness and this old monk be of the same age."

At that time, the Master was temporarily lodged at a nearby monastery. Taking the opportunity, they selected a site and began building a Chan monastery. When the Master heard of it, he had someone tell the prince, "If even one blade of grass is

disturbed, this old monk will return to Zhaozhou." At that time, the military commissioner Dou offered an orchard worth fifteen thousand strings of cash. It was named Zhenji Chan Monastery, and was also called the Dou Family Orchard. After the Master entered the monastery, the assembly gathered there like the clouds and sea.

At that time, the Prince of Zhao respectfully presented robes bestowed by imperial decree from Youzhou in honor of the Prince of Yan. The ceremonial reception in Zhen Prefecture was fully prepared, but the Master firmly declined to accept them. Those attending carried the chest before the Master and said, "For the sake of the Chan master's Buddhadharma, the prince earnestly asks you to wear these robes." The Master said, "For the sake of the Buddhadharma, this old monk therefore will not wear these robes." Those attending said, "At least consider the prince's face." The Master said, "What has this to do with a secular official?" The prince then personally took the robes and placed them on the Master's body, bowing in congratulations repeatedly. The Master merely acknowledged him.

The Master resided in Zhaozhou for two years. When he was about to pass away, he told his disciples, "After I have died, cremate me. Do not painstakingly sift out relics. A lineage master and his disciples should not be like the vulgar world. The body is illusory; how could relics arise from it? This must not be done."

He instructed a young attendant to send a whisk to the Prince of Zhao, with the message: "This is what the old monk has never exhausted in a lifetime of use."

On the tenth day of the eleventh month in the wuzi year, the Master sat upright and passed away. At that time, at the Dou Family Orchard, there were tens of thousands of monastics and laypeople, with carts and horses; their cries of grief shook the plains.

At that time, the Prince of Zhao performed all the rites for the dead. His tears of grief and lamentation were no different from those shed when the golden coffin concealed its radiance at Kuśinagara. Everyone raised a lofty pagoda and specially erected a great stele. The posthumous title bestowed was Chan Master Zhenji, and the stūpa was called Guangzu.

On the thirteenth day of the first summer month in the eleventh year of Baoda of the Later Tang, a student consulted Chan Master Huitong of the Eastern Monastery in the Eastern Capital about the circumstances of the teaching activity of Zhaozhou's predecessor. Having made reverence, he withdrew, and was then given brush and writing materials to record the facts in full.