

Joshu's Dog

Case

A monk asked Joshu, "Has a dog the Buddha Nature?" Joshu answered, "Mu."

Mumons Comment

In order to master Zen, you must pass the barrier of the patriarchs. To attain this subtle realization, you must completely cut off the way of thinking. If you do not pass the barrier, and do not cut off the way of thinking, then you will be like a ghost clinging to the bushes and weeds. Now, I want to ask you, what is the barrier of the patriarchs? Why, it is this single word "Mu." That is the front gate to Zen. Therefore it is called the gateless gate of Zen. If you pass through it, you will not only see Joshu face to face, but you will also go hand in hand with the successive patriarchs, entangling yotp: eyebrows with theirs, seeing with the same eyes, hearing with the same ears. Isn't that a delightful prospect? Wouldn't you like to pass this barrier? Arouse your entire body with its three hundred and sixty bones and joints and its eighty-four thousand pores of the skin; summon up a spirit of great doubt and concentrate on this word "Mu." Carry it continuously day and night. Do not form a nihilistic conception of vacancy, or a relative conception of "has" or "has not." It will be just as if you swallow a red-hot iron ball, which you cannot spit out even if you try. All the illusory ideas and delusive thoughts accumulated up to the present will be exterminated, and when the time comes, internal and external will be spontaneously united. You will know this, but for yourself only, like a dumb man who has had a dream. Then all of a sudden an explosive conversion will occur, and you will astonish the heavens and shake the earth. It will be as if you snatch away the great sword of the valiant general Kan'u and hold it in your hand. When you meet the Buddha, you kill him; when you meet the patriarchs, you kill them. On the brink of life and death, you command perfect freedom; among the sixfold worlds and four modes of existence, you enjoy a merry and playful samadhi. Now, I want to ask you again, "How will you carry it out?" Employ every ounce of your energy to work on this "Mu." If you hold on without interruption, behold: a single spark, and the holy candle is lit!

Verse

The dog, the Buddha Nature,
The pronouncement, perfect and final.
Before you say it has or has not,
You are a dead man on the spot.

Gutei Raises a Finger

Case

Whenever Gutei Osho was asked about Zen, he simply raised his finger. Once a visitor asked Gutei's boy attendant, "What does your master teach?" The boy too raised his finger. Hearing of this, Gutei cut off the boy's finger with a knife. The boy, screaming with pain, began to run away. Gutei called to him, and when he turned around, Gutei raised 1 finger. The boy suddenly became enlightened. When Gutei was about to pass away, he said to his assembled monks "I obtained one-finger Zen from Tenryu and used it all my life but I did not exhaust it." When he had finished saying this, he entered in eternal Nirvana.

Mumons Comment

The enlightenment of Gutei and of the does not depend on the finger. If you understand this, Tenryu, Gutei, the boy, and you yourself are all run through with one skewer.

Verse

Gutei made a fool of old Tenryu,
Emancipating the boy with a single slice,
Just as Kyorei cleaved Mount Kasan
To let the Yellow River run through.

The Western Barbarian with No Beard

Case

Wakuan said, "Why has the Western Barbarian no beard?"

Mumons Comment

Study should be real study, enlightenment should be real enlightenment. You should once meet this barbarian directly to be really intimate with him. But saying you are really intimate with him already divides you into two.

Verse

Don't discuss your dream before a fool.
Barbarian with no beard
Obscures the clarity.

Kyogen's "Man up in a Tree"

Case

Kyogen Osho said, "It is like a man up in a tree hanging from a branch with his mouth; his hands grasp no bough, his feet rest on no limb. Someone appears under the tree and asks him, 'What is the

meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?' If he does not answer, he fails to respond to the question. If he does answer, he will lose his life. What would you do in such a situation?"

Mumons Comment

Even if your eloquence flows like a river, it is of no avail. Though you can expound the whole of Buddhist literature, it is of no use. If you solve this problem, you will give life to the way that has been dead until this moment and destroy the way that has been alive up to now. Otherwise you must wait for Maitreya Buddha and ask him.

Verse

Kyogen is truly thoughtless;
His vice and poison are endless.
He stops up the mouths of the monks
And devil's eyes sprout from their bodies.

The Buddha Holds Out a Flower

Case

When Shakyamuni Buddha was at Mount Grdhrakuta, he held out a flower to his listeners. Everyone was silent. Only Mahakashyapa broke into a broad smile. The Buddha said, "I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless, and the Subtle Dharma Gate, independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine. This I have entrusted to Mahakashyapa."

Mumons Comment

Golden-faced Gautama really disregarded his listeners. He made the good look bad and sold dog's meat labeled as mutton. He himself thought it was wonderful. If, however, everyone in the audience had laughed, how could he have transmitted his True Eye?

And again, if Mahakashyapa had not smiled, how could the Buddha have transmitted it? If you say the True Eye of Dharma can be transmitted then the golden-faced old man would be a city slicker who cheats the country bumpkin. If you say it cannot be transmitted, then why did Buddha approve of Mahakashyapa?

Verse

Holding out a flower,
The Buddha betrayed his curly tail.
Heaven and earth were bewildered
At Mahakashyapa's smile.

Joshu's "Wash Your Bowl"

Case

A monk said to Joshu, "I have just entered this monastery. Please teach me." "Have you eaten your rice porridge?" asked Joshu. "Yes, I have," replied the monk. "Then you had better wash your bowl," said Joshu. With this the monk gained insight.

Mumons Comment

When he opens his mouth, Joshu shows his gallbladder. He displays his heart and liver. I wonder if this monk really did hear the truth. I hope he did not mistake the bell for a jar.

Verse

Endeavoring to interpret clearly, You retard your attainment.
Don't you know that flame is fire? Your rice has long been cooked.

Keichu the Wheelmaker

Case

Gettan Osho said, "Keicha, the first wheelmaker, made a cart whose wheels had a hundred spokes. Now, suppose you took a cart and removed both the wheels and the axle. What would you have?"

Comment

If anyone can directly master this topic, his eye will be like a shooting star, his spirit like a flash of lightning.

Verse

When the spiritual wheels turn,
Even the master fails to follow them.
They travel in all directions, above and below,
North, south, east, and west.

Daitso Chisho Buddha

Case

A monk asked Kyo Seije, "Daitso Chisho Buddha sat in zazen for ten kalpas and could not attain Buddhahood. He did not become a Buddha. How could this be?" Seijo said, "Your question is quite self-explanatory."

The monk asked, "He meditated so long; why could he not attain Buddhahood?" Seijo said, "Because he did not become a Buddha."

Comment

I allow the barbarian's realization, but I do not allow his understanding. When an ignorant man realizes it, he is a sage. When a sage understands it, he is ignorant.

Verse

Better emancipate your mind than your body;
When the mind is emancipated, the body is free,
When both body and mind are emancipate,
Even gods and spirits ignore worldly power.

Seizei Is Utterly Destitute

Case

Seizei said to Sozan, "Seizei is utterly destitute. Will you give him support?" Sōzan called out, "Seizei!" Seizei responded, "Yes, sir!"

Sozan said, "You have finished three cups of the finest wine in China, and still you say you have not yet moistened your lips!"

Comment

Seizei pretended to retreat. What was his scheme? Sozan had the eye of Buddha and saw through his opponent's motive. However, I want to ask you at what point did Seizei drink wine?

Verse

Poverty like Hantan's,
Mind like Kōu' s;
With no means of livelihood,
He dares to rival the richest.

Joshu Sees the Hermits

Case

Joshu went to a hermit's cottage and asked, "Is the master in? Is the master in?" The hermit raised his fist. Joshu said, "The water is too shallow to anchor here," and he went away.

Coming to another hermit's cottage, he asked again, "Is the master in? Is the master in?" This hermit, too, raised his fist. Jōsho said, "Free to give, free to take, free to kill, free to save," and he made a deep bow.

Comment

Both raised their fists; why was the one accepted and the other rejected? Tell me, what is the difficulty here? If you can give a turning word to clarify this problem, you will realize that Joshu's tongue has no bone in it, now helping others up, now knocking them down, with perfect freedom. However, I must remind you: the two hermits could also see through Joshu. If you say there is

anything to choose between the two hermits, you have no eye of realization. If you say there is no choice between the two, you have no eye of realization.

Verse

The eye like a shooting star,
The spirit like lightning;
A death-dealing blade,
A life-giving sword.

Zuigan Calls His Master

Case

Zuigan Gen osho called to himself every day, "Master!" and answered, "Yes, sir!" Then he would say, "Be wide awake!" and answer, "Yes, sir! "Henceforward, never be deceived by others!" "No, I won't!"

Comment

Old Zuigan buys and sells himself He takes out a lot of god-masks and devil-masks and puts them on and plays with them. What for, eh? One calling and the other answering; one wide awake, the other saying he will never be deceived. If you stick to any of them, you will be a failure. If you imitate Zuigan, you will play the fox.

Verse

Clinging to the deluded way of consciousness,
Students of the Way do not realize truth.
The seed of birth and death through endless eons:
The fool calls it the true original self.

Tokusan Holds His Bowls

Case

One day Tokusan went down toward the dining room, holding his bowls. Seppo met him and asked, "Where are you off to with your bowls? The bell has not rung, and the drum has not sounded." Tokusan turned and went back to his room. Seppō mentioned this to Ganto, who remarked, "Tokusan is renowned, but he does not know the last word." Tokusan heard about this remark and sent his attendant to fetch Ganto. "You do not approve of me?" he asked. Ganto whispered his meaning. Tokusan said nothing at the time, but the next day he ascended the rostrum, and behold! he was very different from usual! Ganto, going toward the front of the hall, clapped his hands and laughed loudly, saying, "Congratulations! Our old man has got hold of the last word. From now on, nobody in this whole country can outdo him!"

Comment

As for the last word, neither Ganto nor Tokusan has ever dreamed of it! When you look into the matter, you find they are like puppets on the shelf!

Verse

If you realize the first,
You master the last. The first and the last
Are not one word.

14 Nansen Cuts the Cat in Two

Case

Nansen Osho saw monks of the Eastern and Western halls quarreling over a cat. He held up the cat and said, "If you can give an answer, you will save the cat. If not, I will kill it." No one could answer, and Nansen cut the cat in two. That evening Joshu returned, and Nansen told him of the incident. Joshu took off his sandal, placed it on his head, and walked out, "If you had been there, you would have saved the cat," Nansen remarked.

Comment

Tell me, what did Joshu mean when he put the sandal on his head? If you can give a turning word on this, you will see that Nansen's decree was carried out with good reason. If not, "Danger!"

Verse

Had Joshu been there,
He would have done the opposite;
When the sword is snatched away,
Even Nansen begs for his life.

15 Tozan's Sixty Blows

Case

Tozan came to study with Ummon. Ummon asked, "Where are you from?" "From Sato," Tozan replied. "Where were you during the summer?" "Well, I was at the monastery of Hozu, south of the lake." "When did you leave there?" Ummon asked. "On August 25" was Tozan's reply. "I spare you sixty blows," Ummon said. The next day Tozan came to Ummon and said, "Yesterday you said you spared me sixty blows. I beg to ask you, where was I at fault?" "Oh, you rice bag!" shouted Ummon. "What makes you wander about, now west of the river, now south of the lake?" Tozan thereupon came to a mighty enlightenment experience.

Comment

If Ummon had given Tozan the true food of Zen and encouraged him to develop an active Zen spirit, his school would not have declined as it did. Tozan had an agonizing struggle through the whole night, lost in the sea of right and wrong. He reached a complete impasse. After waiting for the dawn, he again went to Ummon, and Ummon again made him a picture book of Zen. Even though he was directly enlightened, Tozan could not be called brilliant. Now, I want to ask you,

should Tozan have been given sixty blows or not? If you say yes, you admit that all the universe should be beaten. If you say no, then you accuse Ummon of telling a lie. If your ally understand the secret, you will be able to breathe out Zen spirit with the very mouth of Tozan.

Verse

The lion had a secret to puzzle his cub:
The cub crouched, leaped and slid forward.
The second time, a casual move led to checkmate:
The first arrow was light, but the second went deep.

16 When the Bell sounds

Case

Ummon said, "The world is vast and wide; Why do you put on your seven-piece robe at sound of the bell?"

Comment

In studying Zen, you should not be swayed by sounds and forms. Even though you attain insight when hearing a voice or seeing a form, this is simply the ordinary way of things. Don't you know that the real Zen student commands sounds, controls forms, is clear-sighted at every event and free on every occasion? Granted you are free, just tell me: Does the sound come to the ear or does the ear go to the sound? If both sound and silence die away, at such a juncture how could you talk of Zen? While listening with your ear, you cannot tell. When hearing with your eye, you are truly intimate.

Verse

With realization, things make one family;
Without realization, things are separated in a thousand ways.
Without realization, things make one family;
With realization, things are separated in a thousand ways.

17 Cho the National Teacher Gives Three Calls

Case The National Teacher called his attendant three times, and three times the attendant responded. The National Teacher said, "I long feared that I was betraying you, but really it was you who were betraying me." Comment The National Teacher called three times, and his tongue fell to the ground. The attendant responded three times, and he gave his answer with brilliance. The National Teacher was old and lonely; he held the cow's head and forced it to eat grass. The attendant would have none of it; delicious food has little attraction for a man who is satiated. Tell me, at what point was the betrayal? When the country is flourishing, talent is priced. When the home is wealthy, the children are proud. Verse

He carried an iron yoke with no hole
And left a curse to trouble his descendants. If you want to hold
up the gate and the doors, You must climb a mountain of swords with bare feet.

18 Tozan' s "Masagin"

Case

A monk asked Tozan, "What is Buddha?" Tozan replied, "Masagin [three pounds of flax]."

Comment

Old Tozan attained the poor Zen of a clam. He opened the two halves of the shell a little and exposed all the liver and intestines inside. But tell me, how do you see Tozan?

Verse

"Three pounds of flax" came sweeping along;
Close were the words, but closer was the meaning.
Those who argue about right and wrong
Are those enslaved by right and wrong.

19 Nansen's "Ordinary Mind Is the Way"

Case

Joshu asked Nansen, "What is the Way?" "Ordinary mind is the Way," Nansen replied. "Shall I try to seek after it?" Joshu asked. "If you try for you will become separated from it," responded Nansen. "How can I know the Way unless I try for it?" persisted jeshn. Nansen said, "The Way is not a matter of knowing or not knowing. Knowing is delusion; not knowing is confusion. When you have really reached the true Way beyond doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space. How can it be talked about on the level of right and wrong?" With these words Joshu came to a sudden realization.

Comment

Nansen dissolved. and melted away before Jöshn's questions, and could not offer a plausible explanation. Even though Joshu comes to a realization, he must delve into it for another thirty years before he can fully understand it.

Verse

The spring flowers, the autumn moon;
Swnmer breezes, winter snow.
If useless things do not clutter your mind,
You have the best days of your life.

20 The Man of Great Strength

Case

Shogen Osho asked, "Why is it that a man of great strength does not lift his legs?" And he also said, "It is not the tongue he speaks with."

Comment

It must be said that shengen shows us all his stomach and intestines. But alas, no one can appreciate him! And even if someone could appreciate him, let him come to me, and I'll beat him severely. Why? If you want to find pure gold, you must see it through fire.

Verse

Liftin his leg, he kicks up the Scented Ocean;
Lowenng his head, he looks down on the fourth Dhyana heaven. There is no space vast enough for his body. Now, somebody write the last line here.

21 Ummon's "Kanshiketsu"

Case

A monk asked Unmon, "What is Buddha?" Unmon replied "Kanshiketsu!"

Comment

Ummon was too poor to prepare plain food, too busy to speak from notes. He hurriedly took up shiketsu to support the Way. The decline of Buddhism was thus foreshadowed.

Verse

Lightning flashing, Sparks shooting;
A moment's blinking, Missed forever.

22 Kashyapa's "Knock down the FlagPole"

Case

Ananda asked Kashyapa, "Th World-honored One gave you the golden robe; did he give you anything else?" "Anandal" cried Kashyapa. "Yes, sir!" answered Ananda . "Knock down the flagpole at the gate," said Kashyapa.

Comment

If you can give a turning word at this point, see that the meeting at Mount Grdhrakuta is still solemnly continuing. If not, then this is what Vipasyin Buddha worried about from remote ages: up to now he has still not acquired die essence.

Verse

Tell Dle-question or answer-which was more intimate?
Many have knit their brows over this;
Elder brother calls, younger brother answers, and they betray
the family secret.
They had a special spring, not one of yin and yang.

23 Think Neither Good Nor Evil

Case

The Sixth Patriarch was pursued by the monk Myo as far as Taiyu Mountain. The patriarch, seeing Myo coming, laid the robe and bowl on a rock and said, "This robe represents the faith; it should

not be fought over. If you want to take it away, take it now." Myo tried to move it, but it was as heavy as a mountain and would not budge. Faltering and trembling, he cried out, "I came for the Dharma, not for the robe. I beg you, please give me your instruction." The patriarch said, "Think neither good nor evil. At this very moment, what is the original self of the monk Myo?" At these words, Myo was directly illuminated. His whole body was covered with sweat. He wept and bowed, saying, "Besides the secret words and the secret meaning you have just now revealed to me, is there anything else, deeper still?" The patriarch said, "What I have told you is no secret at all. When you look into your own true self, whatever is deeper is found right there." Myo said, "I was with the monks under Obai for many years but could not realize my true self. But now, receiving your instruction, I know it is like a man drinking water and knowing whether it is cold or warm. My lay brother, you are now my teacher." The patriarch said, "If you say so, but let us both call Obai our teacher. Be mindful to treasure and hold fast to what you have attained."

Comment

The Sixth Patriarch was, so to speak, hurried into helping a man in an emergency, and he displayed a grandmotherly kindness. It is as though he peeled a fresh lichi, removed the seed, put it in your mouth, and asked you to swallow it down.

Verse

You cannot describe it; you cannot picture it;
You cannot admire it; don't try to eat it raw.
Your true self has nowhere to hide;
When the world is destroyed, it is not destroyed.

24 Fuketsu's Speech and Silence

Case

A monk asked Fuketsu, "Both speech and silence are faulty in being *ri* or *bi*. How can we escape these faults?" Fuketsu said, "I always remember the spring in Konan, where the partridges sing; How fragrant the countless flowers!"

Comment

Fuketsu's Zen spirit was like lightning and opened a clear passage. However, he was entangled in the monk's words and could not cut them off. If you can really grasp the problem, you can readily find the way out. Now, putting language *samadhi* aside, say it in your own words.

Verse

He does not use a refined phrase;
Before speaking, he has already handed it over.
If you chatter on and on,
You will find you have lost your way.

25 Kyoan's Dream

Case

In a dream Kyozan Osho went to Maitreya's place and was led in to sit in the third seat. A senior monk struck with a gavel and said "Today the one in the third seat will speak." Kyozan rose and striking with the gavel said "The truth of Mahayana is beyond the four propositions and transcends the hundred negations. Taicho! Taicho!" (Hear the truth!)

Comment

Now tell me, did Kyozan preach or did he not? If he opens his mouth, he is lost; if he seals his mouth, he is lost. Even if he neither opens nor shuts his mouth, he is a hundred and eight thousand miles away from the truth.

Verse

In broad daylight, under the blue sky,
He fancies a dream in a dream;
He makes up a monstrous story
And tries to deceive the whole crowd.

26 Two Monks Roll Up the Blinds

Case

When the monks assembled before the midday meal to listen to the lecture, the great Hogen of Seiryō pointed at the bamboo blinds. Two monks simultaneously went and rolled them up. Hogen said, "One gain, one loss."

Comment

Tell me, who gained and who lost? If you have an eye to penetrate the secret, you will see where Seiryō Kokushi failed. However, I warn you strongly against discussing gain and loss.

Verse

Rolling up the blinds, the great sky is open,
But the great sky does not come up to Zen.
Why don't you throw them all down from the sky,
And keep your practice so close that no air can escape?

27 Nansen's "Not Mind, Not Buddha, Not Things"

Case

A monk asked Nansen, "Is there any Dharma that has not been preached to the people?" Nansen answered, "There is." "What is the truth that has not been taught?" asked the monk. Nansen said, "It is not mind; it is not Buddha; it is not things."

Comment

At this question, Nansen used up all his treasure and was not a little confused.

Verse

Talking too much spoils the virtue;
Silence is truly unequalled,

Let the mountains become the sea;
I'll give you no comment.

Ryutan Blows Out the Candle

Case

Tokusan asked Ryutan about Zen far into the night. At last Ryutan said, "The night is late. Why don't you retire?" Tokusan made his bows and lifted the blinds to withdraw, but he was met by darkness. Turning back to Ryutan, he said, "It is dark outside." Ryutan lit a paper candle and handed it to him. Tokusan was about to take it when Ryutan blew it out. At this, all of a sudden, Tokusan went through a deep experience and made bows.

Ryutan said, "What sort of realization do you have?" "From now on," said Tokusan, "I will not doubt the words of an old osho who is renowned everywhere under the sun." The next day Ryutan ascended the rostrum and said, "I see a fellow among you. His fangs are like the sword tree. His mouth is like a blood bowl. Strike him with a stick, and he won't turn his head to look at you. Someday or other, he will climb the highest of the peaks and establish our Way there."

Tokusan brought his notes Diamond Sutra to the front of the hall, pointed to them with a and said, "Even though you have exhausted the abstruse doctrines, it is like placing a hair in a vast space. Even though you have learned all the secrets of the world, it is like a drop of water dripped on the great ocean." And he burned all his notes. Then making bows, he took his leave of his teacher.

Comment

Before Tokusan crossed the barrier from his native place, his mind burned and his mouth uttered bitterness. He went southward, intending to stamp out the doctrines of special transmission outside the sutras. When he reached the road to Reishu, he asked an old woman to let him have lunch to "refresh the mind." "Your worship, what sort of literature do you carry in your pack?" the old woman asked. "Commentaries on the Diamond Sutra," replied Tokusan. The old woman said, "I hear it is said in that sutra, 'The past mind cannot be held, the present mind cannot be held, the future mind cannot be held.' Now, I would like to ask you, what mind are you going to have refreshed?" At this question Tokusan was dumbfounded. However, he did not remain inert under her words but asked, "Do you know of any good teacher around here?" The old woman said, "Five miles from here you will find Ryutan Osho."

Coming to Ryutan, Tokusan got the worst of it. His former words were inconsistent with his later ones. As for Ryutan, he seemed to have lost all sense of shame in his compassion toward his son. Finding a bit of live coal in the other, enough to start a fire, he hurriedly poured on muddy water to annihilate everything at once. A little cool reflection tells us it was all a farce.

Verse

Hearing the name cannot surpass seeing the face;
Seeing the face cannot surpass hearing the name.
He may have saved his nose,
But alas! he lost his eyes.

29 The Sixth Patriarch's "Your Mind Moves"

Case

The wind was flapping a temple flag, and two monks started an argument. One said the flag moved, the other said the wind moved; they argued back and forth but could not reach a conclusion. The Sixth Patriarch said, "It is not the wind that moves, it is not the flag that moves; it is your mind that moves." The two monks were awe-struck.

Comment

It is not the wind that moves; it is not the flag that moves; it is not the mind that moves. How do you see the patriarch? If you come to understand this matter deeply, you will see at the two monks got gold when buying iron. The patriarch could not withhold his compassion and courted disgrace.

Verse

Wind, flag, mind moving,
All equally to blame.
Only knowing how to open his mouth,
Unaware of his fault in talking.

30 Baso's "This Very Mind Is the Buddha"

Case

Daibai asked Baso, "What is the Buddha?" Baso answered, "This very mind is the Buddha."

Comment

If you directly grasp Base's meaning, you wear the Buddha's clothes, eat the Buddha's food, speak the Buddha's words, do the Buddha's deeds-that is, you are the Buddha himself. However, alas! Daibai misled not a few people into taking the mark on the balance for the weight itself. How could he realize that even mentioning the word "Buddha" should make us rinse out our mouths for three days? If a man of understanding hears anyone say, "This very mind is the Buddha," he will cover his ears and rush away.

Verse

The blue sky and bright day,
No more searching around!
"What is the Buddha?" you ask:
With loot in your pocket, you declare yourself innocent.

31 Joshu Investigates an Old Woman

Case

A monk asked an old woman, "What is the way to Taisan?" The old woman said, "Go straight on." When the monk had proceeded a few steps, she said, "A good, respectable monk, but he too goes that way." Afterward someone told Joshu about this. Jōshū said, "Wait a bit, I will go and investigate the old woman for you." The next day he went and asked the same question, and the old

woman gave the same answer. On returning, jeshu said to his disciples, "I have investigated the old woman of Taisan for you."

Comment

The old woman only knew how to sit still in her tent and plan the campaign; she did not know when she was shadowed by a spy. Though old Joshu showed himself clever enough to take a camp and overwhelm a fortress, he displayed no trace of being a great commander. If we look at them, they both have their faults. But tell me, what did Joshu see in the old woman?

Verse

The question was like the others,
The answer was the same.
Sand in the rice,
Thorns in the mud.

32 A Non-Buddhist Philosopher Questions the Buddha

Case

A non-Buddhist philosopher said to the Buddha, "I do not ask for words; I do not ask for non-words." The Buddha just sat there. The philosopher said admiringly, "The World-honored One, with his great mercy, has blown away the clouds of my illusion and enabled me to enter the Way." And after making bows, he took his leave. Then Ananda asked the Buddha, "What did he realize, to admire you so much?" The World-honored One replied, "A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip."

Comment

Ananda was the Buddha's disciple, but his understanding was not equal to that of the non-Buddhist. I want to ask you, what difference is there between the Buddha's disciple and the non-Buddhist?

Verse

On the edge of a sword,
Over the ridge of an iceberg,
With no steps, no ladders,
Climbing the cliffs without hands.

33 Baso's "No Mind, No Buddha"

Case

A monk asked Baso "What is the Buddha?" Baso answered, "No mind no Buddha."

Comment

If you understand this, you have finished studying Zen.

Verse

Present a sword if you meet a swordsman;
Don't offer a poem unless you meet a poet.
When talking, tell one-third of it;
Don't divulge the whole at once.

34 Nansen's "Reason Is Not the Way"

Case

Nansen said, "Mind is not the Buddha; reason is not the Way."

Comment

Nansen, growing old, had no shame. Just opening his stinking mouth, he let slip the family secrets. Yet there are very few who are grateful for his kindness.

Verse

The sky clears, the sun shines bright,
The rain comes, the earth gets wet.
He opens his heart and expounds the whole secret,
But I fear he is little appreciated.

35 Seijo's Soul Separated

Case

Goso said to his monks, "Seijo's soul separated from her being. Which was the real Seijo?"

Comment When you realize what the real is, you will see that we pass from one husk to another like travelers stopping for a night's lodging. But if you do not realize it yet, I earnestly advise you not to rush about wildly. When earth, water, fire, and air suddenly separate, you will be like a crab struggling in boiling water with its seven or eight arms and legs. When that happens, don't say I didn't warn you!

Verse

The moon above the clouds is ever the same; Valleys and mountains are separate from each other.
All are blessed, all are blessed; Are they one or are they two?

Notes

The story of Seijo's two souls comes from a Chinese book of ghost stories. When a baby, Seijo was betrothed to her cousin Ochu. However, when she grew up, her father wanted to give her in marriage to another young man. Öchü left home in indignation and went up the Yangtze River by boat. At midnight someone came running along the bank eagerly calling Ochu's name. It was Seijo. They journeyed together to a distant place, and there they lived and had two children. Five years went by, and they became homesick; they yearned to see their parents again. So they decided to visit their birthplace. Coming down the river Ochu left Seijo in the boat and went alone to her father to make apology for their having run away. But to his astonishment, he was told that Seijo had been in bed unconscious ever since he left home. There were found to be two Seijos, one in the boat and the other sick in bed. But when the one in the boat came into the house, the other one got out of bed, whereupon the two met and melted together into one Seijo.

36 When You Meet a Man of the Way

Case

Goso said, "When you meet a man of the Way on the path, do not meet him with words or with silence. Tell me, how will you meet him?"

Comment

In such a case, if you can manage an intimate meeting with him it will certainly be gratifying. But if you cannot, you must be watchful in every way.

Verse

Meeting a man of th Way on the road,
Meet him with neither words nor silence.
A punch on the jaw:
Understand, if you can directly understand.

37 Joshu's Oak Tree

Case

A monk asked Joshu, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming to China?" Joshu said, "The oak tree in the garden."

Comment

If you understand Joshu's answer intimately, there is no Shakya before you, no Maitreya to come.

Verse

Words cannot express things;
Speech does not convey the spirit.
Swayed by words, one is lost;
Blocked by phrases, one is bewildered.

38 A Buffalo Passes the Window

Case

Goso said, "A buffalo passes by the window. His head, horns, and four legs all go past. But why can't the tail pass too?"

Comment

If you make a complete about-face, open your eye, and give a turning word on this point, you will be able to repay the four kinds of love that have favored you and help the sentient beings in the three realms who follow you. If you are still unable to do this, return to this tail and reflect upon it, and then for the first time you will realize something.

Verse

Passing by, it falls into a ditch;
Coming back, all the worse, it is lost.
This tiny little tail,
What a strange thing it is!

39 A Mistake in Speaking

Case

A monk said to Ummon, "The brilliance of the Buddha silently illuminates the whole universe..." But before he could finish the verse Ummon said, "Aren't those the words of Chosetsu the Genius?" "Yes they are," answered the monk. "You have slipped up in your speaking," Ummon said. Afterward, Shishin Zenji brought up the matter and said, "Tell me, at what point did the monk err in his speaking?"

Comment

If you dearly understand this and realize how exacting Ummon was in his method, and what made the monk err in his speaking, you are qualified to be a teacher of heaven and earth. If you are not yet dear about it, you are far from saving yourself.

Verse

A line is cast in the rapids,
The greedy will be caught.
Before you start to open your mouth,
Your life is already lost!

Note

The brilliance of the Buddha silently illuminates the whole universe.
Wise and ignorant, sentient and nonsentient form one family.
No non-action appearing, the whole is manifested.
The slightest stir of the six roots makes it overcast.
Cutting off delusion increases evils, Seeking after the absolute invites a curse, Looking after worldly affairs does no harm, Nirvana and samsara are like Bowers in a fantasy.

40 Tipping Over a Water Bottle

Case

When Isan Osho was with Hyakujo, he was head cook, of the monastery. Hyakujo wanted to choose a master for Mount Tai-i, so he called together all the monks and told them that anyone who could answer his question in an outstanding manner would be chosen. Then he took a water bottle and stood it on the floor, and said, "You may not call this a water bottle. What do you call it?" The head monk said, "It cannot be called a stump." Hyakujo asked Isan his opinion. Isan tipped over the water bottle with his feet and went out. Hyakujo laughed and said, "The head monk loses." And Isan was named as the founder of the new monastery.

Comment

Isan displayed great spirit in his action, but he could not cut himself free from Hyakujo's apron string's. He preferred the heavier task to the lighter one. Why was he like that, eh? He took off his headband to bear the iron yoke.

Verse

Tossing bamboo baskets and ladles away,
He made a glorious dash and swept all before him.
Hyakujo's barrier cannot stop his advance;
Thousands of Buddhas come forth from the tips of his feet.

41 Bodhidharma's Mind-Pacifying

Case

Bodhidharma sat facing the wall. The Second Patriarch stood in the snow. He cut off his arm and presented it to Bodhidharma, crying, "My mind has no peace as yet! I beg you, master, please pacify my mind!" "Bring your mind here and I will pacify it for you," replied Bodhidharma. "I have searched for my mind, and I cannot take hold of it," said the Second Patriarch. "Now your mind is pacified," said Bodhidharma.

Comment

That broken-toothed old Hindu came so importantly, thousands of miles over the sea. This was raising waves where there was no wind. In his last years he induced enlightenment in his disciple, who, to make matters worse, was defective in the six roots. Why, Shasanro did not know four ideographs.

Verse

Coming east, directly pointing,
You entrusted the Dharma, and trouble arose;
The clamor of the monasteries
Is all because of you.

42 The Girl Comes out of Samadhi

Case

Once, in the old days, in the time of the World-honored One, Manjusri went to the assembly of the Buddhas and found that everyone had departed to his original dwelling place. Only a girl remained, sitting in samadhi close to the Buddha's throne. Manjusri asked Shakyamuni Buddha, "Why can the girl get near the Buddha's throne, while I cannot?" Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Bring her out of her samadhi and ask her yourself." Manjusri walked around the girl three times, snapped his fingers once, took her to the Brahma heaven, and exerted all his miraculous powers to bring her out of her meditation, but in vain. The World-honored One said, "Even a hundred thousand Manjusris cannot make her wake up. But down below, past twelve hundred million lands as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, there is the Bodhisattva Momyo. He will be able to arouse her from her samadhi." Instantly the Bodhisattva Momyo emerged from the earth and made a bow to the World-honored One, who gave him his imperial order. The Bodhisattva went over to the girl and snapped his fingers once. At this she came out of her samadhi.

Comment

Old Shakyamuni put a pretty drama on the stage and failed to enlighten the masses. I want to ask you: Manjusri is the teacher of the seven Buddhas; why couldn't he arouse the girl from her Samadhi? How was it that Momyo, a Bodhisattva at the beginner's stage, could do it? If you understand this intimately, you will enjoy Nagya's grand Samadhi in the busiest activity of consciousness.

Verse

One was successful, the other was not;
Both secured freedom of mind.
One in a god-mask, the other in a devil-mask;
Even in defeat, a beautiful performance.

43 Shuzan' s Shippei

Case

Shuzan Osh held up a shippei (staff of office) before his disciples and said, "You monks! If you call this a shippei, you oppose its reality. If you do not call it a shippei, you ignore the fact. Tell me, you monks, what will you call it?"

Comment

If you call it a shippei, you oppose its reality. If you do not call it a shippei, you ignore the fact. Words are not available; silence is not available. Now, tell me quickly, what is it?

Verse

Holding up the shippei,
He takes life, he gives life.
Opposing and ignoring interweave.
Even Buddhas and patriarchs beg for their lives.

44 Basho's Staff

Case

Basho Osho said to his disciples, "If you have a staff, I will give you a staff. If you have no staff, I will take it from you."

Comment

It helps me wade across a river when the bridge is down. It accompanies me to the village on a moonless night. If you call it a staff, you will enter hell like an arrow.

Verse

The depths and shallows of the world
Are all in its grasp.
It supports the heavens and sustains the earth.
Everywhere, it enhances the doctrine.

45 Hoen's "Who Is He"

Case

Hoen of Tozan said, "Even Shakyā and Maitreya are servants of another. I want to ask you, who is he?"

Comment

If you can really see this "another" with perfect clarity, it is like encountering your own father at a crossroads. Why should you ask whether you recognize him or not?

Verse

Don't draw another's bow,
Don't ride another's horse,
Don't discuss another's faults
Don't explore another's affairs.

46 Proceed On from the Top of the Pole

Case

Sekiso Osho asked, "How can you proceed on further from the top of a hundred-foot pole?"
Another eminent teacher of old said, "You, who sit on the top of a hundred-foot pole, although you have entered the Way you are not yet genuine. Proceed on from the top of the pole, and you will show your whole body in the ten directions."

Comment

If you go on further and turn your body about, no place is left where you are not the master. But even so, tell me, how will you go on further from the top of a hundred-foot pole? Eh?

Verse

He darkens the third Eye of insight and clings to the first mark on the scale. Even though he may sacrifice his life, he is only a blind man leading the blind.

47 Tosotsu's Three Barriers

Case

Tosotsu Etsu Osho set up three barriers for his disciple:

- You leave no stone unturned to explore profundity, simply to see into your true nature. Now, I want to ask you, just at this moment, where is your true nature?

- If you realize your true nature, you are free from life and death. Tell me, when your eyesight deserts you at the last moment, how can you be free from life and death?
- When you set yourself free from life and death, you should know your ultimate destination. So when the four elements separate, where will you go?

Comment

If you can put turning words to these three questions, you are the master wherever you may stand and command Zen whatever circumstances you may be in. If otherwise, listen: gulping down your meal will fill you easily, but chewing it well can sustain you.

Verse

This moment's thought sees through eternal time;
Eternal time is just this moment.
If you see through this moment's thought,
You see through the man who sees through this moment.

48 Kempo's One Road

Case

A monk said to Kempo Osho, "It is written, 'Bhagavats in the ten directions. One straight road to Nirvana.' I still wonder where the road can be." Kempo lifted his staff, drew a line, and said, "Here it is."

Later the monks asked the same question of Ummon, who held up his fan and said, "This fan jumps up to the thirty-third heaven and hits the nose of the deity Salera Devanam Indra. When you strike the carp of the eastern sea, the rain comes down in torrents."

Comment

One, going to the bottom of the sea, lifts up clouds of dust; the other, on top of the highest mountain, raises towering waves to wash the sky. One holding fast, the other letting go, each stretches out his hand to support the profound teaching. They are just like two riders starting from opposite ends of the course and meeting in the middle. But none on earth can be absolutely direct. When examined with a true eye, neither of these two great masters knows the road.

Verse

Before a step is taken, the goal is reached;
Before the tongue is moved, the speech is finished.
Though each move is ahead of the next,
There is still a transcendent secret.