

CASE ONE JOSHU'S DOG

A monk asked Joshu in all earnestness, "Has a dog Buddha nature or not?" Joshu said, "Mu!"

CASE TWO HYAKUJO AND A FOX

Whenever Master Hyakujo gave teisho on Zen, an old man sat with the monks to listen with the monks and always withdrew when they did. One day, however, he remained behind, and the master asked, "Who are you, standing here before me?" The old man replied, "I am not a human being. In the past, in the time of Kasho Buddha, I was the head of this monastery. Once a monk asked me, 'Does an enlightened man also fall into causation or not?' I replied, 'He does not.' Because of this answer, I was made to live as a fox for 500 lives. I beg you, please say the turning words on my behalf and release me from the fox body." The old man then asked Hyakujo, "Does an enlightened man also fall under the law of causation or not?" The Master said, "He does not ignore causation." Hearing this, the old man was at once enlightened. Making a bow to Hyakujo, he said, "I have now been released from the fox body, which will be found behind the mountain. I dare to make a request to the Master. Please bury it as you would a deceased monk.."

The master had the Ino strike the gavel and announce to the monks that there would be a funeral for a deceased monk after the midday meal. The monks wondered, saying, "We are all in good health. There is no sick monk in the Nirvana hall. What is it all about?"

After the meal, the Master led the monks to a rock behind the mountain, poked out a dead fox with his staff, and cremated it.

In the evening the Master ascended the rostrum in the hall and told the monks the whole story. Obaku thereupon asked, "The old man failed to give the correct turning words and was made to live as a fox for 500 lives, you say; if, however, his answer had not been incorrect each time, what would he have become?" The Master said, "Come closer to me, I will tell you." Obaku then wstepped forward to Hyakujo and slapped him. The Master laughed aloud, clapping his hands, and said, "I thought a foreigner's beard is red, but I see that it is a foreigner with a red beard."

CASE THREE GUTEI RAISES A FINGER

Master Gutei, whenever he was questioned, just stuck up one finger.

At one time, he had a young attendant whom a visitor asked, “What is the Zen your Master is teaching?” The boy also stuck up one finger. Hearing of this, Gutei cut off the boy’s finger with a knife. As the boy ran out screaming with pain, Gutei called to him. When the boy turned his head, Gutei stuck up his finger. The boy was suddenly enlightened.

When Gutei was about to die, he said to the assembled monks, “I attained Tenryu's Zen of One Finger. I used it all through my life, but could not exhaust it.” When he had finished saying this, he died.

CASE FOUR THE FOREIGNER HAS NO BEARD

Wakuan said, “Why has the foreigner from the West no beard?”

CASE FIVE KYOGEN’S MAN UP A TREE

Master Kyogen said, “It is like a man up a tree who hangs from a branch by his mouth; his hands cannot grasp a bough, his feet cannot touch the tree. Another man comes under the tree and asks him the meaning of Bodhidharma’s coming from the West? If he does not answer, he does not meet the questioner's need. If he answers, he will lose his life. At such a time, how should he answer?”

CASE SIX SHAKYAMUNI HOLDS UP A FLOWER

Long ago, when the World-Honored One was at Mount Grdhrakuta to give a talk, he held up a flower before the assemblage. At this, all remained silent. The Venerable Kasho alone broke into a smile. The World-Honored One said: “I have the all-pervading true Dharma, incomparable Nirvana, exquisite teaching of formless form. It does not rely on letters and is transmitted outside Scriptures. I now Hand it to Maha Kasho.”

CASE SEVEN JOSHU SAYS “WASH YOUR BOWLS”

Once a monk made a request of Joshu, "I have just entered the monastery," he said, "Please give me instructions, Mater." Joshu said, "Have you had your breakfast?" "Yes, I have." replied the monk. "Then," said Joshu, "wash your bowls." The monk had an insight.

CASE EIGHT KEICHU MAKES CARTS

Master Gettan said to a monk, "Keichu made a cart whose wheels had a hundred spokes. Take both front and rear parts away and remove the axle: then what will it be?"

CASE NINE DAITSU CHISO

Once a monk said to Master Seijo of Koyo, "Daitso Chiso Buddha did Zazen on a Bodhi seat for ten kalpas. Buddha Dharma was not manifested, nor did he attain Buddhahood. Why was it?"

Jo said, "Your question is splendid indeed." The monk persisted, "He did practice Zazen on a Bodhi seat. Why did he not attain Buddhahood?"

Jo replied, "Because he did not attain Buddhahood."

CASE TEN SEIZEI, A POOR MONK

A monk once said to Master Sozan, "I am poor and destitute. I beg you, oh Master, please help me and make me rich."

Sozan said. "Venerable Seizei!"

"Yes, Master," replied Seizei.

Sozan remarked, "having tasted three cups of the best wine, do you still say your lips are not yet moistened?"

CASE ELEVEN JOSHU SEES THE TRUE NATURE OF TWO HERMITS

Joshu came to a hermit's hut and asked, "Anybody in? Anybody in?" The hermit thrust up his fist. Joshu said, "The water is too shallow for a ship to anchor." Thereupon he left.

Again he went to a hermit and asked, "Are you in? Are you in?"

The hermit held up his fist. "The water is too shallow to anchor a vessel," said Joshu, and went away. He then came to another hermit, and called out, "Are you in? Are you in?" This hermit also held up his fist. "You are free either to give or to take away, either to kill or to give life," said Joshu, bowing to him.

CASE TWELVE ZUIGAN CALLS “MASTER”

Every day Master Zuigan Shigen used to call out to himself, “Oh, Master!” and would answer himself, “Yes?” “Are you awake?” he would ask, and would answer, “Yes, I am.” “Never be deceived by others, any day, any time.” “No, I will not.”

CASE THIRTEEN TOKUSAN CARRIED HIS BOWLS

Tokusan one day came down to the dining room carrying his bowls. Seppo said, “Old Master, the bell has not rung nor the drum has not been struck. Where are you going with your bowls?” Tokusan at once turned back to his room. Seppo told this incident to Ganto, who remarked, “Great Master though he is, Tokusan has not yet grasped the last word of Zen.”

Hearing of this, Tokusan sent his attendant to call Ganto in, and asked, “Do you not approve of me?” Ganto whispered his reply to him. Tokusan was satisfied and silent. The next day Tokusan appeared on the rostrum. Sure enough, his talk was different from the usual ones. Ganto came in front of the monastery, laughed heartily, clapped his hands, and said, “What a great joy it is! The old Master has now grasped the last word of Zen. From now on nobody in the whole world can ever make light of him.”

CASE FOURTEEN NANSEN KILLS THE CAT

Once the monks of the Eastern Hall and the Western Hall were disputing about a cat. Nansen, holding up a cat, said, “Monks, if you can say a word of Zen, I will spare the cat. If you cannot, I will kill it.” No monk could answer. Nansen finally killed the cat. In the evening, when Joshu came back, Nansen told him of the incident. Joshu took off his sandal, put it on his head, and walked off. Nansen said, “If you had been there, I could have saved the cat!”

CASE FIFTEEN TOZAN GETS SIXTY BLOWS

When Tozan came to have an interview with Unmon, Unmon asked, “Where have you been recently?” “At Sado, Master,” Tozan replied. “Where did you stay during the last period?” “At Hozu of Konan,” replied Tozan. “When did you leave there?” “On the 25th of August,” Tozan answered. Unmon explained, “I give you sixty blows with my stick!”

The next day Tozan came up again and asked the Master, "Yesterday you gave me sixty blows with your stick. I do not know where my fault was." Unmon cried out, "You rice-bag! Have you been prowling about like that from Kosei to Konan?" At this Tozan was enlightened.

CASE SIXTEEN

THE SOUND OF THE BELL AND THE SEVEN-PANEL ROBE

Unmon said, "The world is vast and wide like this. Why do we put on our seven-panel robe at the sound of the bell?"

CASE SEVENTEEN

THE NATIONAL MASTER'S THREE CALLS

The national teacher called his attendant three times, and three times his attendant responded. The national teacher said, "I thought I was standing alone with my back to you, but now I find that you are standing alone with your back to me."

CASE EIGHTEEN

TOZAN'S THREE POUNDS OF FLAX

A monk asked Master Tozan, "What is Buddha?"
Tozan said, "Three pounds of Flax"

CASE NINETEEN

ORDINARY MIND IS THE WAY

Joshu earnestly asked Nansen, "What is the Way?" Nansen answered, "The ordinary mind is the Way." Joshu asked, "Should I direct myself toward it or not?" Nansen said, "If you try to turn toward it, you go against it." Joshu asked, "If I do not try to turn toward it, how can I know that it is the Way?" Nansen answered, "The Way does not belong to knowing or not-knowing. Knowing is delusion; not-knowing is a blank consciousness. When you have really reached the true Way beyond all doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space. How can it be talked about on a level of right and wrong?" At these words, Joshu was suddenly enlightened.

CASE TWENTY

A MAN OF GREAT STRENGTH

Master Shogen said, “Why is it that a man of great strength does not lift up his legs?” He also said, “It is not with the tongue that we speak.”

CASE TWENTY-ONE UNMON’S KANSHIKETSU

A monk asked Unmon in all earnestness, “What is Buddha?” Unmon said, “A dried up shit-stick!”

CASE TWENTY-TWO KASHYAPA’S FLAGPOLE

Ananda asked Kashyapa in all earnestness, “The World-Honored One transmitted the brocade robe to you. What else did he transmit to you?” Kashyapa called, “Ananda!” Ananda replied, “Yes, Master.” Kashyapa said, “Knock down the flagpole at the gate.”

CASE TWENTY-THREE THINK NEITHER GOOD NOR EVIL

The sixth patriarch was once pursued by the monk Myo as far as Mount Daiyu. The patriarch, seeing Myo coming, laid the robe and bowl on a rock and said, “This robe represents the faith. How can it be competed for by force? I will allow you to take it away.”

Myo tried to lift it up, but it was as immovable as a mountain. Terrified and trembling with awe, he said, “I came for the Dharma, not the robe. I beg you, please reveal it to me.”

The patriarch said, “Think neither good nor evil. At that very moment, what is the primal face of Monk Myo?” In that instant, Myo suddenly attained deep realization, and his whole body was covered with sweat. In tears, he bowed and said, “Besides the secret words and secret meaning you have just now revealed to me, is there anything else deeper yet?”

The patriarch said, “What I have now preached to you is no secret at all. If you reflect on your own true face, the secret will be found in yourself.”

Myo said, “Though I have been at Obai with the other monks, I have never realized what my true self is. Now, thanks to your instruction, I know it is like a man who drinks water and knows for himself whether it is cold or warm. Now you, lay brother, are my master.” The patriarch said, “If that is the way you feel, let us both have Obai for our master. Be mindful and hold fast to what you have realized.”

CASE TWENTY-FOUR LEAVING SPEECH AND SILENCE BEHIND

A monk asked Fuketsu in all earnestness, “Both speech and silence are concerned with *ri* and *mi*. How can we transcend them?” Fuketsu said, “I constantly think of Konan in March, where partridges chirp among hundreds of sweet-scented blossoms.”

CASE TWENTY-FIVE THE SERMON OF THE THIRD SEAT

Master Kyozan went to Maitreya’s abode in a dream and was led to the third seat. A venerable monk struck the stand with a gavel and said, “Today the third seat is due to speak.” Kyozan stood up, struck the stand with the gavel and said, “The Dharma of Mahayana is beyond the four propositions and transcends the hundred negations. Listen! Listen!”

CASE TWENTY-SIX TWO MONKS ROLL UP THE BLINDS

A monk once went to Daihogen of Seiryō before the midday meal to ask for instruction. Gen pointed to the bamboo blinds with his hand. At that moment, two monks went over to the blinds and rolled them up in an identical manner. Gen said, “One has gained, one has lost.”

CASE TWENTY-SEVEN NOT MIND, NOT BUDDHA

A monk asked Nansen in all earnestness, “Is there any Dharma that has not been preached to the people?” Nansen said, “There is.” The monk said, “What is the Dharma which has never been preached to the people?” Nansen said, “This is not mind; this is not Buddha; this is not a thing.”

CASE TWENTY-EIGHT RYUTAN’S NAME ECHOES ON AND ON

One night Tokusan persisted in asking Ryutan for instruction. Ryutan finally said, “The night is late. Why don’t you go to bed?” Tokusan thanked him, made his bows, raised the door curtain and left. Seeing how dark the night was, he turned back and said, “It’s pitch black

outside.” Ryutan lit a lantern and handed it to Tokusan. Just as Tokusan reached for it, Ryutan blew it out. At that Tokusan came to sudden realization and made a deep bow.

Ryutan asked, “What have you realized?” Tokusan replied, “From now on, I will not doubt the words of an old master who is renowned everywhere under the sun.” The following day Ryutan ascended the rostrum and declared, “There is a man among you whose fangs are like trees of swords and whose mouth is like a bowl of blood. Strike him and he won’t turn his head. Some day he will settle on the top of an isolated peak and establish our Way there.”

Tokusan brought his sutra commentaries to the front of the hall, held up a torch and said, “Even though we have exhausted abstruse doctrine, it is like placing a hair in vast space. Even though we have learned the vital points of all the truths in the world, it is like a drop of water thrown into a big ravine.” He then burned all his manuscripts. After making his bows, he left.

CASE TWENTY-NINE NOT THE WIND, NOT THE FLAG

The wind was flapping a temple flag, and two monks were having an argument about it. One said, “The flag is moving.” The other said, “The wind is moving.” They argued back and forth but could not reach the truth. 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 struck with awe.

CASE THIRTY JUST MIND, JUST BUDDHA

Taibai asked Baso in all earnestness, “What is Buddha?” Baso answered, “The very mind is Buddha.”

CASE THIRTY-ONE JOSHU SEES THROUGH AN OLD WOMAN

A monk once asked an old woman, “What is the way to Taizan?” The old woman said, “Go straight on.” When the monk had gone a few steps she said, “This good, honest priest goes off that way, too.” Later a monk told Joshu about this, Joshu said, “Wait a bit. I will go and see through the old woman for you.” The next day he went and asked the same question and old woman also made the same reply. On returning Joshu said to his disciples, “I have seen through the old woman of Taizan for you.”

CASE THIRTY-TWO A NON-BUDDHIST QUESTIONS BUDDHA

A non-Buddhist in all earnestness asked the World-Honored One, “I do not asked about words, I do not ask about no-words.” The World-Honored One just sat still. The non-Buddhist praised him, saying, “The World-Honored One in his great benevolence and great mercy has opened the clouds of my delusion and enabled me to enter the way.” Then bowing, he took his leave. Ananda asked Buddha, “What did the non-Buddhist realize that made him praise you so much? The World-Honored One replied, “He is just like a fine horse that runs at the shadow of a whip.”

CASE THIRTY-THREE NO MIND, NO BUDDHA

A monk asked Baso in all earnestness, “What is Buddha?” Baso replied, “No mind, no Buddha.”

CASE THIRTY-FOUR KNOWING IS NOT THE WAY

Nansen said, “Mind is not the Buddha; knowing is not the Way.”

CASE THIRTY-FIVE SEIJO’S SOUL IS SEPARATED

Goso asked a monk, “Seijo and her soul are separated; which one is the true Seijo?”

CASE THIRTY-SIX MEETING A MAN ON THE PATH WHO HAS ACCOMPLISHED THE WAY

Goso said, “If you meet a man on the path who has accomplished the Way, do not greet him with words or silence. Tell me, how will you greet him?”

CASE THIRTY-SEVEN THE OAK TREE IN FRONT OF THE GARDEN

A monk asked Joshu in all earnestness, “What is the meaning of the patriarch’s coming from the West?” Joshu said, “The oak tree in the front of the garden.”

CASE THIRTY-EIGHT A COW PASSES THROUGH A LATTICED WINDOW

Goso said, “For example, it’s just like a great cow passing through a latticed window. Her head, horns, and four legs have passed through. Why is it that her tail can’t pass through, too?”

CASE THIRTY-NINE UNMON AND A MISTAKE IN SPEECH

A monk once asked Unmon, “The radiance serenely illuminates the whole vast universe...” Before he could finish the first line, Unmon suddenly interrupted, “Aren’t those the words of Chosetsu Shusai?” The monk replied, “Yes, they are.” Unmon said, “You have slipped up in the words.” Afterwards, Zen Master Shishin brought the matter up and said, “Tell me, at what point did he slip?”

CASE FOURTY KICKING OVER THE WATER JUG

When Master Isan was studying under Hyakujo, he had the position of tenzo. Hyakujo wanted to choose a master for Mount Daii. He called the head monk and the rest of his disciples together to have them present their views and said that the outstanding person should be sent. Then he took a water jug, put it on the floor and said, “You may not call this a water jug. What will you call it?” Hyakujo then asked Isan. Isan immediately kicked over the water jug and left. Hyakujo laughed and said, “First monk, you have been defeated by Isan.” So he ordered Isan to found the new monastery.

CASE FOURTY-ONE BODHIDHARMA PUTS THE MIND TO REST

Bodhidharma sat facing the wall. The second patriarch, standing in the snow, cut off his arm and said, “Your disciple’s mind is not yet at peace. I beg you, master, give it rest.” Bodhidharma said, “Bring your mind to me and I will put it to rest.” The patriarch replied, “I have searched for the mind but have never been able to find it.” Bodhidharma said, “I have finished putting it to rest for you.”

CASE FORTY-TWO A WOMAN COMES OUT OF SAMADHI

Once in the ancient days of the World-Honored One, Manjusri went to the place where Buddhas were assembled and found that all the Buddhas were departing for their original dwelling places. Only a young woman remained, sitting in samadhi close to the Buddha's throne. Manjusri asked Shakyamuni Buddha, "Why can that woman be near the Buddha's throne, while I cannot?"

The Buddha said, "Just awaken her and raise her up out of samadhi and ask her yourself."

Manjusri walked around the woman three times, snapped his fingers once, took her up to the Brahman heaven, and exerted all his supernatural powers, but he could not bring her out of samadhi.

The World-Honored One said, "Even a hundred or a thousand Manjusris could not bring her out of Samadhi. Down below, past twelve hundred million lands as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, is the Bodhisattva Momyo. He will be able to arouse her from her samadhi."

Instantly the Bodhisattva Momyo emerged out of the earth and made a bow to the World-Honored One who gave his command. The Bodhisattva went before the woman and snapped his fingers once. At this, the woman came out of samadhi.

CASE FORTY-THREE SHUZAN'S SHIPPEI

Master Shuzan held up a shippei before his disciples and said, "You monks, if you call this a shippei, you are adhering to the fact. If you do not call this a shippei, you are opposing the fact. Tell me, you monks, what will you call it?"

CASE FORTY-FOUR BASHO'S SHUJO

Master Basho said to his disciples, "If you have a shujo, I will give it to you. If you have no shujo, I will take it away from you."

CASE FORTY-FIVE WHO IS THAT ONE?

Patriarch En of Tozan said, "Even Shakyamuni and Maitreya are servants of that one. Just tell me who is that one?"

CASE FORTY-SIX STEPPING FORWARD FROM THE TOP OF A POLE

Master Sekiso said, “How will you step forward from the top of a hundred-foot pole?” Another eminent master of old said, “Even though one who is sitting on the top of a hundred-foot pole has entered realization, it is not yet real. He must step forward from the top of the pole and manifest his whole body throughout the world in ten directions.”

CASE FORTY-SEVEN TOSOTSU’S THREE BARRIERS

Master Tosotsu Etsu set up three barriers and asked his students:

“The purpose of going around sweeping grasses and inquiring as to the subtle truth is only to realize the self nature. Now, you venerable monks, where is the self-nature at this very moment?”

“When you have realized your self nature, you can free yourself from life-and-death. How would you free yourself from life-and-death when the light of your eyes is falling to the ground?”

“When you have freed yourself from life-and-death, you will know the place to go. Where will you depart for after your four elements have decomposed?”

CASE FORTY-EIGHT KEMPO’S ONE WAY

A monk asked Master Kempo in all earnestness, “In a sutra it says, “Ten-direction Bhagavats, one Way to the gate of nirvana. I wonder where the Way is.” Kempo lifted up his stick, drew a line and said, “Here it is.”

Later a monk asked Unmon to give instruction about this. Unmon held up his fan and said, “This fan jumps up to the heaven of the thirty-three devas and adheres to the nose of the deva Taishaku. When a carp in the eastern sea is struck with a stick, it rains torrents as though a tray of water is overturned.”

MUMON’S POSTSCRIPT

Adhering to the instructions and guidance of the Buddhas and patriarchs, I have delivered my commentary like a judge who passes sentence on a criminal exactly according to his confession, without adding even one superfluous word. I have shown you my brain, taken off its lid and exposed the eyeballs. All of you should grasp It directly and stop seeking It from others.

A man of enlightenment will be able to grasp the ultimate point upon hearing only a small part of what I’ve presented. For him, there is no gate to enter, no stairs to go up. He will

pass through the barrier swinging his arms without asking the permission of the gate-keeper. Remember what Gensha said: “No-gate is the gate to emancipation, no-consciousness is the consciousness of the devotee of the Way,” and what Haku’un said: “I know most clearly the Way. It is just this. Why can’t it be passed through?”

These remarks of mine are just like smearing milk on red soil. If you pass through the gateless gate, you make a fool of Mumon. If you are unable to pass through the gateless gate, you are turning your back on yourself. It is rather easy to realize the so-called nirvana mind, but it is difficult to make clear the wisdom of discrimination. If you realize the wisdom of discrimination, your land will become peaceful by itself.

The first year of Jotei (1228)
Five days before the end of the summer sesshin.
Respectfully inscribed by Monk Mumon Ekai,
Eighth descendant of Yogi.

MUMON’S ZEN WARNINGS

To obey the rules and regulations is to tie yourself without a rope. To act freely and without restraint is heresy and devilry. To be aware of the mind, making it pure and quiet, is the false Zen of silent illumination. To arbitrarily ignore causal relations is to fall into a deep pitfall. To abide

in absolute awakening with no darkening is to wear chains with a yoke. Thinking of good and evil is being in Heaven and Hell . To have ideas about the Buddha and the Dharma is to be imprisoned inside two iron mountains. Becoming aware of consciousness at the instant it arises is toying with the mind. Practicing concentration in quiet sitting is an action of devils.

If you go forward, you will lose the essence. If you go back, you oppose the truth. If you neither go forward nor back, you are a dead man breathing. Tell me now, what will you do? Make the utmost effort to attain realization completely in this life! Do not let yourself circulate karma forever.

ORYU’S THREE BARRIERS

How is my hand like the Buddha’s hand?
How is my leg like a donkey’s leg?
Everybody has his own cause of birth.

MURYO SOJU’S VERSES ON ORYU’S THREE BARRIERS

How is my hand like the Buddha’s hand?

Groping for the pillow at my back, I could feel it.
In spite of myself, I burst out laughing.
From the first, the whole body is the hand.

How is my leg like a donkey's leg?

Before taking a step, I have already trodden the ground.
Freely I pass over the four seas just as I wish.
I ride topsy-turvy on Yogi's three legged donkey.

Everybody has his own cause of birth.

Everything penetrates to the world prior to consciousness.
Nada broke his own bones and gave them back to his father.
Did the fifth patriarch have to rely on a causal
Relation with a father?

“Buddha's hand,” “The donkey's leg,” and “The cause of birth”: these are not the Buddha, not the Way, not Zen. Do not wonder at the steepness of the gateless gate. It has around the monks' animosity.

Mumon was recently at Zuigan Temple. Sitting on the straw-rope seat, he judged the words of Zen masters of old and new. He cut off the head of thoughts of both sages and ordinary people. Many dragons in hiding roared like thunder.

I invited Master Mumon to be leading monk. I thank him with this rustic poem.

Late spring of the third year of Jotei (1230 A.D.)

Written by Muryo Soju.

MOKYU'S EPILOGUE

Bodhidharma came from the West. His teaching did not rely on letters but pointed directly to the mind of man and advocated becoming Buddha by seeing into one's self-nature. To say, “direct pointing” is already a meandering, and to add “becoming Buddha” is falling into senility. It is gateless from the beginning. Why is there the barrier or gate? His kindness is grandmotherly and spreads abusive voices. Muan (Mokyu himself), by adding a superfluous word, wants to make a 49th case. There might be some entanglement. Open your eyes widely and grasp it.

The summer of the fifth year of Junyu (1245 A.D.)

The second edition written by Mokyo.

ANBAN'S FORTY-NINTH CASE

Old Zen Master Mumon composed the 48 cases and judged the koans of venerable masters of ancient times. He is just like a fried bean-cake vendor who makes his buyers open their mouths to eat his cakes until they are unable either to swallow them down or vomit them up.

Even so, Amban wants to bake another piece of cake in his red-hot oven to present to Mumon. I don't know where the old master will dig his teeth into it. If he can eat it in one bite, he will emit light and shake the earth. If not, it and the other 48 cases will all turn into hot sand.

Speak at once! Speak at once! A sutra says: "Stop it! Stop it! It should not be expounded. My Dharma is subtle and difficult to speculate on."

Amban says, "Where does the Dharma come from? On what basis does its subtlety lie? What is it when it is expounded? Why call only Bunkan a chatter-box? Shakyamuni himself was wordy. The old man raised phantoms and so entangled the descendants of hundreds and thousands of generations in creepers and vines that they are unable to stick their heads out.

Such amazing talks as these cases cannot be spooned up or cooked enough though we steam them in a boiling pot. There was an onlooker who asked in some confusion, "After all, how will you decide?" Amban placed his ten finger nails together in supplication and said, "Stop! Stop! It is not to be expounded. My Dharma is subtle and difficult to speculate about." Then he suddenly drew a small circle over the two characters for "difficult" and "speculate" and showed it to the people. The five thousand scrolls of the Tripitaka and Vimilakirti's gate of non-duality are all in it.

THE VERSE

"If one says fire is light,
Do not respond to it, shaking your head.
A thief recognizes a thief,
At one question he immediately nods."

Early summer of the sixth year of Junyu (1246 A.D.)
Written by Amban at a fishing villa by West Lake.