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Koans, part 2, selections from The Blue Cliff Record
comments by student t
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The following koans are selected from 'The Blue Cliff Record', a collection of 100 koans with commentaries by Yuan-wu (1063-1135), translated by T Cleary and JC Cleary, 2005*. Yuan-wu's commentaries are omitted here; see the original translation for commentaries and the complete collection of 100 koans. (Koans, part 1, selections mostly from The Gateless Gate is available here)

'A koan is a story, dialogue, question or statement which is used in Zen practice to provoke the 'great doubt' and test a student's progress in Zen practice' (Wikipedia <koan>.

**CASE 1: The Highest Meaning of the Holy Truths**

Emperor Wu of Liang asked the great master Bodhidharma, “What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?” Bodhidharma said, "Empty, without holiness." The Emperor said, “Who is facing me?” Bodhidharma replied, "I don't know." The Emperor did not understand. After this Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtse River and came to the kingdom of Wei.

Later the Emperor brought this up to Master Chih and asked him about it. Master Chih asked, "Does your majesty know who this man is?" The Emperor said, "I don't know." Master Chih said, "He is the Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, transmitting the Buddha Mind Seal.” The Emperor felt regretful, so he wanted to send an emissary to go invite (Bodhidharma to return). Master Chih told him, "Your majesty, don't say that you will send someone to fetch him back. Even if everyone in the whole country were to go after him, he still wouldn't return."

1. **The highest meaning of the holy truths** resides in the spiritual realm. We see only a small fragment of spiritual truths in the world of manifestation of things.
2. **Empty** = no thing; a state prior to manifestation of things; in the spiritual realm; prior to determination of what is holy or not holy; hence without holiness. Holy and not holy, and know and not know are dualities that participate in the realm of manifestation.
3. Replace 'empty' with 'incomplete': our perception of the holy truths is incomplete. We are visually impaired, we see visible light but unable to see infrared and ultraviolet as nocturnal animals see; our hearing is limited to the human audible range but unable to hear infrasound and ultrasound that other animals hear; we have 5 senses instead of 6, 7 or 8 senses; we engage the 3 dimensional space and ignore higher spatial dimensions; and Earth resides in a rarefied outer edge of the Milky Way galaxy, far away from the hot bed of activity with high concentration of stars near the center of the galaxy. Limited range of perception generates incomplete answer to the question: **what is the highest meaning of the holy truths.** We have incomplete truths about Earth, the universe, manifestation, spirit and god.
CASE 2: The Ultimate Path is Without Difficulty
Chao Chou, teaching the assembly, said, “The Ultimate Path is without difficulty; just avoid picking and choosing. As soon as there are words spoken, ‘this is picking and choosing’, ‘this is clarity’. This old monk does not abide within clarity; do you still preserve anything or not?”

At that time a certain monk asked, “Since you do not abide within clarity, what do you preserve?
Chao Chou replied, “I don’t know either.”
The monk said, “Since you don’t know, Teacher, why do you nevertheless say that you do not abide within clarity?”
Chao Chou said, “It is enough to ask about the matter; bow and withdraw.”

1. ’This old monk does not abide within clarity’ = this monk does not discriminate.
2. Preserve = to keep, retain, hang onto, own, maintain, protect or self identify; unwilling to let go of prejudices, preconceived ideas, and opinions. If Chao Chou does not discriminate, then he keeps an open mind without prejudices; he does not preserve anything.
3. Since you do not abide within clarity, what do you preserve? = if you do not discriminate, please identify the object or concept wherein you do preserve. But there is no preservation, no thing, no object or concept, no prejudgment, only absence, empty space, hence no thing to identify in empty space.
4. Chao Chou replied, “I don’t know either.” He could have replied ‘no prejudgment, empty space, a state prior to manifestation of things’. The monk missed the point, and persists on duality, preserve and not preserve, obtaining the identity of something in empty space. Wherein Chao Chou disengaged from the conversation. Chao Chou’s predicament is using words to describe the Ultimate Path but ‘description’ of Path is not ‘treading’ Path. Poetry is not river, you can describe a river with eloquent poetry, but a river supports aquatic life, provide drinking water for cities, provide irrigation water for vegetations, generate hydropower, transport nutrients, sediments and cargo and provide a space for recreation; description of river is not river; description of the Ultimate Path is not treading the path. Description is noun, treading is verb.
5. Picking and not picking, clarity and not clarity, preserve and not preserve are dualities. ’Duality’ compares 2 opposing elements or forces; the comparison is noun-to-noun or verb-to-verb. Avoid duality with nonduality; accept things as they are; allow; be in the moment without picking and choosing and without comparing 2 opposing elements. Another way to avoid duality is to realize that verb is not opposite of noun; hence verb-to-noun relationships are not dualities. For example, ‘the rebel without a cause rebels against his father’, rebel (noun) is not opposite of rebel (verb). Rock, soil, air, water, fire, sound, light, hand, eye and wish are both noun and verb; they are not antithesis to themselves. Of the top 2200+ words in the English language, 1500 can be used as nouns. Out of these 1500 words, 800 can be used as both noun and verb (see <talkenglish.com> *). It is clear that the 800 words do not form dualities when used as noun and verb in the same sentence; and to generalize, nouns are not antithesis of verbs. Transcend the duality of 2 opposing elements through verb-noun relationships: awaken-consciousness, walk-path, find-purpose, test-
discernment, allow-wisdom, be-creative, act with objective, labor in vineyard. Labor is not antithesis to vineyard; act is not antithesis to objective; be is not antithesis to creative; rock is not antithesis to rock; soil is not antithesis to soil; air is not antithesis to air...

**CASE 5: Hsueh Feng's Grain of Rice**

Hsueh Feng, teaching his community, said, "Pick up the whole great earth in your fingers, and it's as big as a grain of rice. Throw it down before you: if, like a lacquer bucket, you don't understand, I'll beat the drum to call everyone to look."

1. **Lacquer bucket** = a dark bucket, container for stuff, a reference to mind filled with darkness, ignorance, preconceived notions, prejudices, misunderstandings and lack of understanding (Case 1 commentary, p 9*).
2. Reading the first sentence and ignoring the second sentence, one could conclude that everything is mind; and from the perspective of mind, Earth is the size of a grain of rice. The second sentence is Hsueh Feng's challenge: *throw it* (the Earth) *down before you*. Can not do: hence arguing the opposite, mind does not contain Earth; mind is unable to 'throw the Earth down before you'. Mind observes and analyzes perceptions but it is not the giver of purpose for Earth, finger or rice.

**CASE 7: Hui Ch'ao Asks about Buddha**

A monk (named Hui Ch'ao) asked Fa Yen, "Hui Ch'ao asks the Teacher, what is Buddha?"

Fa Yen said, "You are Hui Ch'ao"

1. *'You are Hui Ch'ao' = know thyself, master thyself.*
2. Similar to Zanoni, p 199* ...*tell me (if thou canst read the future,) tell me that her lot will be fair, and that her choice at least is wise'*...*My pupil...thy first task must be to withdraw all thought, feeling, sympathy from others. The elementary stage of knowledge is to make self, and self alone, thy study and thy world. Thou hast decided thine own career; thou hast renounced love; thou hast rejected wealth, fame and the vulgar pomps of power. What then are all mankind to thee? To perfect thy faculties, and concentrate thy emotions, is henceforth thy only aim!* Perfect thy faculties, learn to see infrared and ultraviolet as the Earth sees; learn to hear infrasound and ultrasound as the Earth hears; learn to perceive the 4, 5, and 6th spatial dimensions of ether, desire and thought. Proof of higher spatial dimensions, karma, reincarnation, and the region where the dead go are attained with 6th, 7th, 8th and higher senses. Your first task is to develop higher senses, 'know thyself, master thyself'.

**CASE 8: Ts'ui Yen's Eyebrows**

At the end of the summer retreat Ts'ui Yen said to the community, "All summer long I've been talking to you, brothers; look and see if my eyebrows are still there."
Pao Fu said, "The thief's heart is cowardly."
Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "Grown."
Yun Men said, "A barrier

1. **Talk** = a means to convey information about something, recite rules, laws, scripture, beliefs, commandments, data, facts and knowledge = nouns. Where is verb: work, do, build, serve?
2. **Eyebrow** = a peripheral barrier that protects the eye but the eyebrow is not used for seeing.
3. 'Thief', 'grown' and 'barrier': Ts'ui Yen is a 'thief', he takes from others and gives empty teachings in return; his teachings are tired, old, and 'grown', he should retire; his talks are 'a barrier' to the Way.
4. 'All summer long ... talking' is not the Way. Spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes perception; perception precedes interpretation of perception by the individual mind; interpretation precedes language, words and talk used to describe interpretation. Ts'ui Yen's talk precedes student's interpretation of the talk. Students' interpretation of Ts'ui Yen's talk is 5 steps removed from spirit; Ts'ui Yen's exposition using words is 4 steps removed from spirit; interpretation of perception is 3 steps removed from spirit; perceptions of the world based on 5 senses is 2 steps removed from spirit; and manifestation of spirit in a tiny region of the Milky Way galaxy is 1 step removed from spirit. Every step removed from spirit is another barrier to spirit, and introduces another possibility for misinterpretation, selective observation, and the observer affecting the object of observation (Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle).
5. Real learning is students developing their higher senses to be able to see reincarnation by following the lives of those who have died and be reborn again, instead of listening to Ts'ui Yen talk about reincarnation. Real learning is students developing their higher sense to be able to see karma by viewing the Memory of Nature in the World of Thought (Akashic Record) and see how past actions impact the present life, instead of listening to Ts'ui Yen talk about karma.
   a. 'Words and speech are just vessels to convey the Path ...Originally the Path is wordless; with words we illustrate the Path. Once you see the Path, the words are immediately forgotten. (Case 12 commentary, p 82)
   b. *The Path is fundamentally without words* (Case 25 commentary, p166)
   c. *The Path is not a matter of words and phrases* (Case 47 commentary, p 282)
   d. Poetry is not river; description of the path is not treading the path.

**CASE 11: Huang Po's Gobblers of Dregs**

Huang Po, instructing the community, said, "All of you people are gobblers of dregs; if you go on travelling around this way, where will you have Today? Do you know that there are no teachers of Ch' an in all of China?"

At that time a monk came forward and said, "Then what about those in various places who order followers and lead communities?"
Huang Po said, "I do not say that there is no Ch'an; it's just that there are no teachers."

1. **People are gobblers of dregs** = people who go from ashram to temple to mosque, to synagogue, to church looking for teacher who can order followers and lead communities. But what about **Today**, now. Today, live and work, emulating the teacher that teaches by example instead of order, lecture and sermons.

2. Time, past, present and future implies motion, activity, things, manifestation and descent of spirit into matter. **Today**, without reference to past or future is to be here now, be in the moment. Be = exist, to live, to take place, or to occur. 'Be here now' does not identify purpose of 'being', or purpose of evolution, resource consumption, energy dissipation, entropy, degradation of environment and species extinction; the purpose of manifestation is unanswered. The purpose of spirit descent into manifestation is to gain experience; to develop discernment between the real, theoretical, imaginary, and illusory; to become active participant in harmony with expressions of manifestation; to join the ranks of divine hierarchy in the co-creation of the universe; to be lesser-gods-in-the-making and to be companions of eternity (Zanoni, p 403).

3. Huang Po demoted dregs (person, places, things, ideas, and teachings) and pointed to 'be', **Today**, now. 'Be here now' by itself, without identifying purpose, is exposed to verb-to-verb duality: 'to be or not to be'. Huang Po does not spoon feed, order or lead his students; he does not identify purpose of being in the moment.

**CASE 14: Yun Men's Appropriate Statement**

A monk asked Yun Men, "What are the teachings of a whole lifetime?"
Yun Men said, "An appropriate statement."

1. **The teaching of a whole lifetime** is to live by example, in so doing you will have stated your teaching: an appropriate statement.

2. **An appropriate statement** = Meditate on your original question; it should lead to fruitful understanding: the difference between 'the teaching' (beliefs, concepts, data, facts, information, knowledge, lectures, proclamations, scripture, and sermons = nouns) and 'the teaching of a whole lifetime' to live by example (= verb).

**CASE 15: Yun Men's Upside-Down Statement**

A monk asked Yun Men, "When it's not the present intellect and it's not the present phenomena, what is it?"
Yun Men said, "An upside-down statement."

1. **Present intellect** = using the mind to interpret perceptions (epistemology)
2. **Present phenomena** = manifestation (ontology)
3. Rephrasing the question: if you don't know what it is, and it is not real, then what is it? Underlying assumption: nothing is outside of mind; with mind you can
create something from nothing (parallel universe and big bang created from nothing); and create nothing out of something (declaring that the material world is Maya, illusions). The statement is upside-down, it starts with intellect and phenomena instead of spirit. Spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes perception; perception precedes interpretation of the perception with individual mind. Mind does not perceive itself; *the eye does not see itself, the ear does not hear itself, the finger does not feel itself, its like a sword doesn't cut itself, fire does not burn itself* (Case 23 commentary, p 157).

4. *'When it's not the present intellect and it is not the present phenomena,* then you will have discovered spirit, ignorance or illusion. Discern the difference between spirit, mind, ignorance and illusion.

**CASE 16: Ching Ch'ing's Man in the Weeds**

A monk asked Ching Ch'ing, *"I am breaking out; I ask the Teacher to break in."*

Ching Ch'ing said, *"Can you live or not?"*

The monk said, *"If I weren't alive, I'd be laughed at by people."*

Ching Ch'ing said, *"You too are a man in the weeds."*

1. *'Breaking out'* of social conditioning or early stages of clairvoyance, perceiving the higher dimensions of ether, desire or thought.
2. *'Break in'* from the other direction; the monk asks the teacher to break in from a higher dimension, remove the obstructions and enable clarity.
3. **Can you live or not?** The student must live and work. The process of 'breaking out' requires work; clairvoyance improves with practice. If you do not work, if someone else does the work for you, then you forgo an opportunity to develop individual character through quality in work and quality in things.
4. What does other people's laughter have to do with self enlightenment? The monk is caught in the weeds of public opinions, socially accepted behavior, conformity, and personal identity.

**CASE 17: Hsiang Lin's Meaning of the Coming from the West**

A monk asked Hsiang Lin, *"What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"*

Hsiang Lin said, *"Sitting for a long time becomes toilsome."*

1. **Coming from the West**: reverse the direction, replace 'from' with 'to': what is the meaning of 'Journey to the West'?
2. **Sitting for a long time** meditating in India was toilsome, so the Patriarch took a trip to China. By extension, the monk should emulate the Patriarch; sitting meditation is not sufficient.
3. A nationalistic question asked by the monk. China is not the central kingdom; there is something outside of China that is new and different.
CASE 18: National Teacher Chung's Seamless Monument

Emperor Su Tsung asked National Teacher Hui Chung, "After you die, what will you need?"

The National Teacher said, "Build a seamless monument for me."

The Emperor said, "Please tell me, Master, what the monument would look like."

The National Teacher was silent for a long time; then he asked, "Do you understand?"

The Emperor said, "I don't understand."

The National Teacher said, "I have a disciple to whom I have transmitted the Teaching, Tan Yuan, who is well versed in this matter. Please summon him and ask him about it."

After the National Teacher passed on, the Emperor summoned Tan Yuan and asked him what the meaning of this was. Tan Yuan said, South of Hsiang, north of T'an;

In between there's gold sufficient to a nation.

Beneath the shadowless tree, the community ferryboat;

Within the crystal palace, there's no one who knows.

1. A seam joins two edges (of cloth stitched together by hand). 'Seamless monument' = monument not made with hands, a monument in the higher dimension, not in the physical realm. Build a nation founded on good citizenship and good deeds with the emperor as living example of good governance.

2. 'The National Teacher was silent for a long time': the teacher did not want to use words to explain the non physical 'seamless monument'. Tan Yuan made oblique reference to good leadership by the emperor to build the seamless monument not made of hands.

CASE 21: Chih Men's Lotus Flower, Lotus Leaves

A monk asked Chih Men, "How is it when the lotus flower has not yet emerged from the water?" Chih Men said, "A Lotus flower."

The monk said, "What about after it has emerged from the water?" Men said, "Lotus leaves."

1. The creative process is inspiration (flower) and perspiration (leaves).

2. The question seeks data, facts, information = noun. The answer is becoming, grow = verb. The lotus spirit descends into matter to evolve; the purpose is to gain experience as flower and leaves, acquire wisdom through living, and participate in the creative expression of spirit. Focusing on duality, 'emerge and not emerge', leads to different understanding than 'evolve'.

CASE 27: Yun Men's The Body Exposed, The Golden Wind

A monk asked Yun Men, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" Yun Men said, "Body exposed in the golden wind."

1. Monk seeks data, facts, information = noun. Yun Men reply with event = verb.
2. **The golden wind** is spirit passing through body (tree and leaves). The question should be about spirit, not body: 'how is it when the tree spirit evolves' instead of 'how is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall'.

CASE 29: Ta Sui's It Goes Along with It
A monk asked Ta Sui, "The conflagration at the end of the eon sweeps through and the universe is totally destroyed. I wonder, is this one destroyed or not?"
Sui said, "It is destroyed."
The monk said, "If so, then this goes along with it."
Sui said, "It goes along with it."

1. Universe = manifestation of spirit. When manifestation ceases, the universe is destroyed and returns back to spirit but spirit is not destroyed. However, spirit and manifestation are noun-to-noun duality. Missing is verb: evolve. Spirit comes into manifestation to gain experience and to evolve. The question should be 'what happens to spirit at the end' and 'what happens to the universe at the end': spirit evolves but manifestation of the universe is destroyed. If the monk identifies himself with spirit, spirit survives at the end. If the monk identifies with manifestation, universe, perception, mind, inhabitant of Earth, a particular race, social rank or personal identity, they are destroyed at the end.

2. We come into manifestation, labor in the world, and build our individual character. Manifestation tests the mind's ability to discern what is real, theoretical, imaginary, meaningless and illusory. Theoretical ideas and imaginations remain in the realm of possibilities; they become real through manifestation, test of time, labor and karma. If our ideas fail the test of time, even in failure, our ability to discern between real and illusory improves. Imagine a table; manifestation tests the imaginary table for accuracy of legs with equal length, parallel leg placement and at proper location; a table that supports load and does not wobble. You can cut corners on building things, and cut corners on building your own health, but eventually manifestation, test of time, and karma will reveal the quality of work. As consciousness expands, building individual health becomes building the health of species; immediate environment become planetary environment. Labor purifies the mind (Zanoni p 230), develop discernment, quality in character, quality in things, quality in work, persistence, patience, observation, reliability, diligence, accuracy, attractiveness and beauty: the necessary attributes to become better stewards of the Earth, lesser-gods-in-the-making and companions of eternity. Even though the universe is totally destroyed at the end, spirit evolves and is not destroyed.

3. **It goes along with it**: there are 2 evolutions; of spirit and of body. Evolution of body goes along with evolution of the universe: eat, sleep, propagate, die and reborn again. Evolution of spirit is descent into matter to acquire experience, build character, become lesser-gods-in-the-making, and give guidance and purpose to evolution of body. The human spirit uses the body (human races) as stepping stones in its evolutionary journey. To survive the conflagration at the end, identify with spirit not body.
CASE 34: Yang Shan Asks "Where Have You Come From?"
Yang Shan asked a monk, "Where have you just come from?"
The monk said, "Mount Lu."
Yang Shan said, "Did you visit Five Elders Peak?"
The monk said, "I didn't get there."
Yang Shan said, "You never visited the mountain at all."
(Later,) Yun Men said, "These words were all for the sake of compassion; thus they had a conversation in the weeds."

1. 'Where have you just come from? = a question to test the monk. Will the monk reply with facts by naming a physical location or from a state of mind and intention? Factual reply that conveys data, information, and knowledge is a 'conversation in the weeds'.
2. Questions used by teachers to inquire the students' understanding of spirit and manifestation duality: Where have you come from: what did you do; have you eaten yet (have some tea); when were you at the temple; what did he or she say; and are there time, space, location, motion and things? Will the student reply with an ordinary understanding of nouns: person, place, things and ideas that arise from manifestation; or will the reply be associated with a transforming consciousness, activity with objective, evolve with purpose (verb-noun relationship)? Where have you come from: I came from a desire to complete my spiritual journey; what did you do: I improved my comprehension of Earth; have you eaten yet: yes I acknowledge the existence of time and the difference between hunger prior to eating and hunger after eating; when were you at the temple: I was at the temple during times of great reverence and great doubt;…
3. You never visited the mountain at all = if mountain refers to a physical location, the monk visited the mountain; if mountain refers to level of attainment, he did not visit the mountain.

CASE 36: Ch'ang Sha Wandering in the Mountains
One day Ch'ang Sha went wandering in the mountains. Upon returning, when he got to the gate, the head monk asked, "Where are you coming from, Master?"
Sha said, "From wandering in the mountains."
The head monk asked, "Where did you go?"
Sha said, "First I went pursuing the fragrant grasses; then I returned following the falling flowers."
The head monk said, "How very much like the sense of springtime."
Sha said, "It even surpasses the autumn dew" dripping on the lotuses."

1. Ch'ang Sha’s replies to 'where are you coming from, where did you go' with activities (verb) instead of location (noun): wandering; went pursuing.
2. Compare this case to other cases that replied to 'where did you come from' with location:
   a. Case 34: where have you come from? Mount Lu;
   b. Case, 35: where have you just come from? the South;
   c. Case 51: where are you coming from? Ling Nan;
   d. Case 54: where did you come here from? Hsi Ch’an
e. **Case 66**: where do you come from? the Western Capital; and
f. **Case 67**: where have you come from? down the mountain.

3. Compare with Parsifal, an opera by Richard Wagner, 1882:
   a. Act 1: *Where are you from?... 'I do not know'.*
   b. Act 3: *Then whence came you? 'Through error and the path of suffering I came...*

4. Reverse the direction: Quo Vadis, where are you going? Is destination a physical location or direction of consciousness and intent?

**CASE 37: P'an Shan's There Is Nothing in the World**

*P'an Shan imparted the words which said, “There is nothing in the triple world; where can mind be found?”*

1. **There is nothing in the triple world**: nothing = no thing; the triple world is not yet filled with the manifestation of things. Spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes perception; perception precedes interpretation of perception with the mind; they are all within spirit.

2. If mind exist but there is no manifestation then mind has no data, information, input or perception to analyze. In absence of data, information and perceptions mind serves no purpose, mind would be held in abeyance or mind would atrophy.

*Where can mind be found* when there is no thing in the triple world and the mind atrophies or is held in abeyance: mind is found within spirit, the predecessor of mind. Spirit does not atrophy.

3. Atrophy: Darwin claims evolution is random in the same way that wind pollination is random. If gene transfer is random, then evolution is random; evolution has no goal; evolution has no purpose. Darwin is creating nothing out of something. Gene transfer is just one of many steps, from gene development to gene expression. Gene expression is not random; some genes are controlled by environment such as temperature, humidity, day length; and some genes remain dormant. The individual's attitude, optimism or pessimism, is part of the environment that facilitates or represses some gene expression. The theory of non-random atrophy proposes evolution with purpose. In a living organism, if a part of the body is unused, it begins to atrophy. Muscles in the body lose their strength due to lack of exercise; eyes of cave dwelling and underground burrowing animal atrophies due to lack of usage and exposure to sunlight. If an organ has no present usage, is not in the process of being discarded by the body, and does not atrophy, then atrophy is held in abeyance. Lobotomy experiments show that much of the human brain have no known usage; sections of the brain can be removed surgically without observable impairment. Yet those unused regions of the brain do not atrophy; those regions of the brain are held for future usage. Atrophy is not random; biological organs held in abeyance for future usage implies evolution is not random, and evolution has purpose. Mind can observe and analyze, but without observation or data, mind atrophies or is held in abeyance by spirit.
CASE 38: Feng Hsueh’s Workings of the Iron Ox

At the government headquarters in Ying Chou, Feng Hsueh entered the hall and said, "The Patriarchal Masters’ Mind Seal is formed like the workings of the Iron Ox: when taken away, the impression remains; when left there, then the impression is ruined. But if neither removed nor left there, is sealing right or is not sealing right?"

At that time there was a certain Elder Lu P‘i who came forth and said, "I have the workings of the Iron Ox: please, Teacher, do not impress the seal."

Hsueh said, "Accustomed to scouing the oceans fishing for whales, I regret to find instead a frog crawling in the muddy sand."

P‘i stood there thinking. Hsueh shouted and said, "Elder, why do you not speak further?" P‘i hesitated; Hsueh hit him with his whisk. Hsueh said, "Do you still remember the words? Try to quote them." As P‘i was about to open his mouth, Hsueh hit him again with his whisk.

The Governor said, "The Buddhist Law and the Law of Kings are the same.

Hsueh said, "What principle have you seen?"

The Governor said, "When you do not settle what is to be settled, instead you bring about disorder."

Hsueh thereupon descended from his seat

1. Workings of the Iron Ox: a canvas, unpainted is blank; when the painting is complete, any additional paint will ruin the completed painting. When an ox finishes plowing the field, any additional plowing will ruin the field: a question of timing and duration of activity that depends on the purpose of actions. Whereas impress or not impress, seal or not seal, plow or not plow, removed nor left there are dualities of ‘opposing forces’.  

2. 'Accustomed to scouing the deep oceans of mind for big fishes, I regret to find a frog crawling in the muddy sand.'

3. Why do you not speak further…try to quote them? = a leading question, will P‘i speak with words and facts or with action? Regrettably, P‘i opened his mouth to speak with words.

4. When you do not settle what is to be settled by peaceful negotiation, you bring in force and disorder.

5. Hsueh thereupon descended from his seat. There was no fishing for whales in places where there is a frog crawling in the muddy sand.

CASE 40: Nan Ch’uan’s It’s like a Dream

As the officer Lu Hsuan was talking with Nan Ch’uan, he said, 'Master of the Teachings Chao said, 'Heaven, earth, and I have the same root; myriad things and I are one body.' This is quite marvelous."

Nan Ch’uan pointed to a flower in the garden. He called to the officer and said, "People these days see this flower as a dream."

1. Perception, interpretation of perception, mind, heaven, earth and flower are manifestations of spirit. Although 'heaven, earth and I have the same root', sameness in spirit does not confer sameness in consciousness of spirit. 1, 2 and 3 are members of the set of integers but membership in the set of integers does not confer sameness in value of integers.
2. **Myriad things and I are one body**, the myriad things are like drops of water in the ocean. The ocean contains the drops; but the drops of water do not contain the ocean. A single water molecule does not have the property of 'wetness'. 'Wetness' is attained by linking many individual water molecules together to form weak polar bonds that surround other chemicals yielding the property of 'wetness', a cooperative effort among multitude of water molecules. A single water molecule has some but not all the properties of the ocean. Membership in the **one body** does not confer sameness in consciousness of the **one body**.

3. *People these days see this flower as a dream* = with mind, it is possible to say this flower is a dream; creating nothing out of something. Poetry is not river; description of path is not treading path; description of flower is not flower. Mind observes and analyze flower but mind is not the creator of flower. Mind's discernment between real and dream of flower is tested by external agencies of manifestation, time and karma. Flower is evolving (verb), but people these days see flower or not flower, thing or not thing, real or not real; people these days see noun instead of verb.

**CASE 42: Layman P’ang's Good Snowflakes**

When Layman P’ang took leave of Yao Shan, Shan ordered ten Ch’an travellers to escort him to the gate. The Layman pointed to the snow in the air and said, "Good snowflakes- they don't fall in any other place."

At the time one of the Ch’an travellers named Ch’uan said, "Where do they fall?" The Layman slapped him once. Ch’uan said, "Even a layman shouldn't be so coarse." The Layman said, "Though you call yourself a Ch’an traveller this way, the King of Death still won't let you go." Ch’uan said, "How about you, Layman?" Again the Layman slapped him and said, "Your eyes see like a blind man, your mouth speaks like a mute."

1. **Good snowflakes** are pure teachings of **Yao Shan**
2. **Where do they fall?** The question circumscribes 'good snowflakes' as things, and 'any other place' as physical location.
3. **King of Death** = entrapment by the physical world

**CASE 43: Tung Shan’s No Cold or Heat**

A monk asked Tung Shan, "When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?"

Shan said, “Why don’t you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?”

The monk said, “What is the place where there is no cold or heat?”

Tung Shan said, "When it’s cold, the cold kills you; when it’s hot, the heat kills you."

1. **Place** = a state of mind, spiritual realm or physical location. The place where there is no heat and cold is the spiritual realm, prior to differentiation of things.
2. Be here now; you are in the material world where heat, cold and death are certainties. Meditate on this, and discover spirit and duality. The question should be 'what is the purpose of manifestation, cold and heat'; not *what is the
place where there is no cold or heat?' Discovering 'location' where there is no cold or heat is different from discovering 'purpose' or 'evolution'.

CASE 44: Ho Shan’s Knowing How to Beat the Drum

Ho Shan imparted some words saying, "Cultivating study is called 'learning.' Cutting off study is called 'nearness.' Going beyond these two is to be considered real going beyond."

A monk came forward and asked, "What is 'real going beyond'?" Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."

Again he asked, "What is the real truth?" Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."

Again he asked, "'Mind is Buddha' - I'm not asking about this. What is not mind and not Buddha?" Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."

Again he asked, "When a transcendent man comes, how do you receive him?"
Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."

1. **Cultivating study** = searching for data, facts, information, knowledge. **Cutting off study** = enough, finish, ready to move beyond data, facts, information, and knowledge.
2. **Knowing how to beat the drum**: Sounding the drum, ringing the bell at the Lunar New Year awakens nature from its winter slumber to prepare for the coming growing season. **Beat the drum** = action to awaken students. The monk focused on **truth, mind, not mind, Buddha, not Buddha** (nouns) instead of awaken (verb).
3. **The real truth** is act with wisdom, evolve with purpose; noun-verb relationship. Wisdom without action is futile; action without wisdom is dangerous.

CASE 45: Chao Chou's Seven-Pound Cloth Shirt

A monk asked Chao Chou, "The myriad things return to one. Where does the one return to?"
Chou said, "When I was in Ch'ing Chou I made a cloth shirt. It weighed seven pounds."

1. **The one returns to** rest, sleep, and cosmic night.
2. **The one returns to** the half. Dolphins and other fishes sleep on their sides with one eye open; half of the brain is active and alert for predators while the other half sleeps for awhile, then the sleeping half trade places with the alert half (unihemispheric sleep). When a flock of birds roost together the outer most birds sleep with one eye open and alert, half of the brain is active, the other half sleeps for awhile, then the sleeping half of the brain trade places with the alert half. **Myriad things return to the one**, the one trade places with the sleeping half. That which was in manifestation returns to cosmic night while the sleeping half awakens to become the new manifestation of things.
3. **The one returns to** the zero, the unmanifest all potential of spirit. Reverse the direction: spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes perception; and perception precedes interpretation of perception by the individual's mind. The
myriad things returns to spirit, that which gave purpose to the existence of things. The myriad things do not return to individual's mind that observes and analyzes perceptions; the observer is not the giver of purpose. Purpose arises from love, imagination, will and spirit; the mind fills in the details of 'purpose' with analysis, data, information and observations.

4. Where does the one return to? 'Where' points to location. The one returns to spirit, but spirit is not location; spirit is everywhere. Chao Chou disengaged from the conversation: "I made a shirt" a reply with activity (verb).

CASE 49: San Sheng's Golden Fish Who Has Passed through the Net
San Sheng asked Hsueh Feng, "I wonder, what does the golden fish who has passed through the net use for food?"
Feng said, "When you come out of the net I'll tell you."
Sheng said, "The teacher of fifteen-hundred people and you don't even know what to say!"
Feng said, "My affairs as abbot are many and complicated."

1. Net = entrapment in the material world.
2. What does the golden fish who has passed through the net use for food? = what does the enlightened person use for food in the higher dimension (is there marrying and giving in marriage in the higher dimension)?
3. When you come out of the net of entanglement in the material world, I'll tell you what the golden fish and the enlightened person use for food. Stay focus on your own passage through the net instead of the golden fish's passage through the net.
4. You don't even know what to say. Sheng miss the point about his own entanglement in the world of manifestation. Feng disengaged from further discussion with Sheng.

CASE 51: Hsueh Feng's What Is It?
When Hsueh Feng was living in a hut, there were two monks who came to pay their respects. Seeing them coming, he pushed open the door of the hut with his hand, popped out, and said, "What is it?" A monk also said, "What is it?" Feng lowered his head and went back inside the hut.

Later the monk came to Yen T'ou. T'ou asked, "Where are you coming from?"
The monk said, "I've come from Ling Nan." T'ou said, "Did you ever go to Hsueh Feng?"
The monk said, "I went there." T'ou said, "What did he have to say?"
The monk recounted the preceding story. T'ou said, "What did he say?"
The monk said, "He said nothing; he lowered his head and went back inside the hut."T'ou said, "Alas! It's too bad I didn't tell him the last word before; if I had told him, no one on earth could cope with old Hsueh."

At the end of the summer the monk again brought up the preceding story to ask for instruction. T'ou said, "Why didn't you ask earlier?" The monk said, "I didn't dare to be casual." T'ou said, "Though Hsueh Feng is born of the same lineage as me, he doesn't die in the same lineage as me. If you want to know the last word, just this is it."
1. **What is it?** an opening question to invoke a reply, will it be conventional wisdom (data, facts, information, knowledge) or enlightened understanding of life as process, an on-going evolution of spirit.

2. **If you want to know the last word, just this is it** = meditate on 'this' (moment); just be; be here now. If you understand 'this' (moment), then no more word need to be said. *The Path is fundamentally without words* (Case 25 commentary, p166).

3. The verb in the interrogative phrase: 'is' points to noun or pronoun; 'do' points to activity or verb:
   a. '*Is*': the most common verb used in interrogative phrases in this collection of 100 koans: 'what is' occurred in 36 koans; 'how is' (6), 'is this' (6), 'when is' (3), 'where is' (3), 'are you' (2) and 'who is' (1). 'To be' and its conjugations = to have identity with, to equal in meaning, live, to take place, or to occur.
   b. '*Do*': the next most common verb used in interrogative phrases in this collection of 100 koans: 'why do' occurred in 9 koans; 'do you' (7); 'what do' (6); 'where did' (5), and 'how do' (3). Do = carry out, perform, execute, and bring about.

4. Herein is a clue. The difference between 'is' and 'do' points to three different spiritual paths: the path of salvation, the path of being (nonduality), and the path of divinity.
   a. '*Is*' = to have identity with, or equal in meaning. 'Is' points to the object of the sentence: person, place, thing or idea (noun). Person, place, thing or ideas are guideposts along path of salvation. Express your faith and devotion to the spiritual master, teacher, guru, or savior; find the place of the Grail castle, Shangri-La, paradise, heaven or escape the place of the wheel of rebirth and suffering; find the sacred things, talisman, crucifix, holy spear; find the right idea, scripture, teaching, word of god, enlightenment; recite the scriptures and follow the prescribed rules to express your faith, devotion and obedience: the path of salvation.
   b. '*Is*' = to have objective existence, to live, to take place, to occur or 'thun sceptics'. 'Is' points to the subject of the sentence: I am. The path of being: be in the moment; just simply be; allow, without reference to person, place, thing or idea, without words, identity, discrimination, classification, judgment or deference to mind. 'To be' in spirit, prior to thought, information and mind; avoid picking and choosing, avoid transforming the material world, or to count the number of fishes in a river, or the number of species of birds on the edge of extinction.
   c. '*Do*' = carry out, perform, execute, or bring about. 'Do' points to activity, verb. The path of divinity: build, develop, help, make, serve, work, participate with other divine hierarchies and become co-creators in building the Earth. Activity and labor develops discernment, quality in character, quality in things, quality in work, persistence, and patience: the necessary attributes to become better stewards of the Earth and lesser-gods-in-the-making. This means return to Earth to work, do, and build a better planet rather than escape from Earth. Divinity: *the works that I do, shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do* (John 14:12, New Testament of the Holy Bible, King James Version. It should
be noted that other gospel writers do not share this view regarding 'do' and 'work').

d. All 3 paths require discernment between the real, theoretical, imaginary and illusory. At present, the path of salvation (engage the spiritual) and the path of divinity (engage the material) are two different paths. They do not lead to the same place: one leads away from Earth (the wheel of rebirth); the other returns to Earth. One is more related to nouns (faith and devotion to person, place, things, and ideas); the other is more related to verbs (act, build, create, do, serve, and work). With our present language structure, nouns are not verbs. The two paths may converge in the future or in a higher dimension where nouns and verbs are more integrated; this may be occurring with 800 words that can be used as both noun and verb. The path of being also engages the spiritual but it has no description; it is determined by the student’s effort in treading nonduality, being in the moment without picking and choosing (description of path is not treading path, hence the path of being has no description).

e. Mass extinction of species, climate change, resource depletion, waste accumulation and pollution are symptoms of greed and ignorance. The path of salvation, the path of being and the path of divinity offers 3 different solutions to greed and ignorance which are the root cause of environmental destruction.

i. The path of salvation identifies what is right and wrong, and joins the side that is right. Act according to right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration (the Noble Eightfold Path). Right action is moral conduct that leads away from greed and ignorance.

ii. The path of being disengages from the right and wrongs found in manifestation and try to contact spirit by being in the moment. In spirit, prior to manifestation, everything is one; there is no picking and choosing, no separation into right and wrong. Be in the moment with nature, without greed or ignorance of nature; without reference to right action or wrong action.

iii. The path of divinity engages manifestation, to join the ranks of divinity in building the natural world: nature and evolution are expression of spirit. Right action is to build the Earth in cooperation with divine hierarchy; transcend greed and ignorance with cooperation.

CASE 52: Chao Chou Lets Asses Cross, Lets Horses Cross
A monk asked Chao Chou, "For a long time I've heard of the stone bridge of Chao Chou, but now that I've come here I just see a simple log bridge."
Chou said, "You just see the log bridge; you don't see the stone bridge."
The monk said, "What is the stone bridge?"
Chou said, "It lets asses cross, it lets horses cross."

The stone bridge is teachings that let students, asses and horses cross. The value of bridge is its utility in conveyance; the value of knowledge is its utility in
build, do and work. The monk focused on stone, not stone, log, not log, and bridge instead of conveyance.

CASE 57: Chao Chou’s Stupid Oaf
A monk asked Chao Chou, “The Ultimate Path has no difficulties-just avoid picking and choosing.’ What is not picking and choosing?”
Chou said, "In the heavens and on earth I alone am the Honored One.”
The monk said, "This is still picking and choosing.'
Chou said, "Stupid oaf! Where is the picking and choosing?“ The monk was speechless.

1. Picking and choosing is intellectual analysis, using mind to discriminate the various parts of manifestation. Not picking and choosing = nonduality, to be in spirit, prior to manifestation of things.
2. I = in unity with one spirit; alone = abandon the world of manifestation; am = to be, thusness; the Honored One = highest state of nonduality, complete enlightenment, attainment in becoming Buddha. I, alone, am, and the Honored One are 4 expression of not picking and choosing. The monk combined the 4 expressions into a single sentence of picking and choosing.

CASE 59: Chao Chou’s Why Not Quote It Fully?
A monk asked Chao Chou, "The Ultimate Path has no difficulties-just avoid picking and choosing. As soon as there are words and speech, this is picking and choosing.’ So how do you help people, Teacher? ”
Chou said, "Why don’t you quote this saying in full?” The monk said, "I only remember up to here."
Chou said, "It’s just this: ‘The Ultimate Path has no difficulties-just avoid picking and choosing.’

1. To 'quote this saying in full' is to walk the path, teach by example.
2. 'It’s just this', meditate on 'this' (moment); just be; be here now.

CASE 60: Yun Men’s Staff Changes into a Dragon
Yun Men showed his staff to the assembly and said, "The staff has changed into a dragon and swallowed the universe. Mountains, rivers, the great earth-where are they to be found?"

1. The staff of meditation applied to deduction: the 3 dimensional universe reduced to the dimension of mind and thought.
2. The staff of meditation applied to induction: the 3 dimensional universe expands to 4, 5, 6 dimensions (love, imagination, will); greater than mind and the world of thought.
3. Mountains, rivers, the great earth, meditation staff and universe are found in spirit.

CASE 62: Yun Men’s Within There Is a Jewel
Yun Men said to the community, "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden inside the mountain of form. Pick up a lamp and go into the Buddha hall; take the triple gate and bring it on the lamp."

The jewel is spiritual purpose; find it with your lamp of discernment.

**CASE 67: Mahasattva Fu Expounds the Scripture**

Emperor Wu of Liang requested Mahasattva Fu to expound the Diamond Cutter Scripture. The Mahasattva shook the desk once, then got down off the seat. Emperor Wu was astonished.

Master Chih asked him, "Does Your Majesty understand?" The Emperor said, "I do not understand." Master Chih said, "The Mahasattva Fu has expounded the scripture."

1. **To expound** = request for data, facts, information, knowledge = noun. Masters and students must work = verb. Work and labor tests our discernment of real from illusory and develops the individual's character through quality of things, and quality of work.

2. **Clap, cut, extend, hit, kick, shake, shout, slap, strike, take, twist, turn, walk, and whip:** verbs used by teachers in this collection of 100 koans. It is up to students to realize 'verb-noun relationships'; students must do, evolve, help, serve, walk, work, and act with objective.

**CASE 73: Ma Tsu's Permutations of Assertion and Denial**

A monk asked Grand Master Ma, "Please, Teacher, going beyond the permutations of assertion and denial, directly point out to me the meaning of the coming from the West."

Master Ma said, "I'm tired today and can't explain for you. Go ask Chih Tsang."

When the monk asked Chih Tsang, Tsang said, "Why didn't you ask the Teacher?". The monk said, "The Teacher had me come here to ask you." Tsang said, "I have a headache today and can't explain for you. Go ask Elder Brother Hai." When the monk asked Elder Brother Hai (Pai Chang), Hai said, "At this point, after all, I don't understand."

When the monk related this to Grand Master Ma, Master Ma said, "Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black."

1. The monk seeks data, facts, information, knowledge. But the spiritual path must be walked with effort, not talked or described by facts.

2. **Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black:** serving up data, fact, information and knowledge that the monk persist on acquiring; information that is unrelated to 'treading the path'. **Tsang:** white; go ask someone else. **Hai:** black; I don't understand.
CASE 76: Tan Hsia's Have You Eaten Yet?
Tan Hsia asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From down the mountain." Hsia said, "Have you eaten yet or not?" The monk said, "I have eaten." Hsia said, "Did the person who brought you the food to eat have eyes or not?" The monk was speechless.
Ch'ang Ch'ing asked Pao Fu, "To give someone food to eat is ample requital of the debt of kindness: why wouldn't he have eyes?" Fu said, "Giver and receiver are both blind." Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "If they exhausted their activity, would they still turn out blind?" Fu said, "Can you say that I'm blind?"

1. **Have you eaten yet or not?** = duality between spirit and manifestation. In spirit, time is 'now', everything is here. Whereas in manifestation, time is 'past, present and future'; debt, present action and future obligations; karma and reincarnation. If you dwell in spirit, then, is manifestation real or illusion; is food real or illusion; is hunger real or illusion; what is your perception of time and hunger prior to eating and after eating: **have you eaten yet?**
2. **Did the person who brought you food to eat have eyes** to see the intentions of your actions (kindness, greeting and karmic exchange)? Reciprocity is implied, did you see the intentions of the person who brought you food?
3. **Tan Hsia asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"** The monk replied with location (noun) instead of activity (verb). Hsia said, "Have you eaten yet or not?" The monk's reply was factual. Hsia said, "Did the person who brought you the food to eat have eyes or not?" The monk was speechless, recognizing that factual replies were not the correct responses to queries pertaining to intentions of 'the person who brought food', 'have you eaten', and 'where have you come from'. Meditate on 'intentions'; it should lead to queries about other people's intentions, anticipations and strategies instead of facts.
4. **Giver and receiver are both blind**, they both saw the little picture of intention and karma, the requital of the debt of kindness; they did not see the big picture of spirit and manifestation duality. **If they exhausted their activity would they still turn out blind** = when they complete their karmic journey for this life on Earth, will they see the big picture of spirit and manifestation duality. **'Can you say that I'm blind'?** = did I not see correctly. Two teachers fencing wits about duality of spirit and manifestation. Spirits (plants, animals and human) evolve at varying stages of consciousness to optimize their existence in the world of manifestation by anticipating the actions and intentions of competitors, predators, and allies. Coyotes, butterflies, cactus and fungus all develop strategies that anticipate the actions of other species who are their opponents or competitors, and to increase access to resources for survival. As part of social development, the monk and the person who brought food learned to see the intentions of others. If they can see people's intentions, then the next step in consciousness is to see intention and purpose of social norms and conformity; what are the intentions of ally and enemy nations; what are the intentions and purpose of other species, watersheds, ecosystems, bioregions; what are the intentions and purpose of Gaia, of evolution, of manifestation. Going beyond the recognition of intentions, the next step is to act, work and evolve with purpose. The purpose of spirit's descension into manifestation is to evolve discernment, build character, become lesser-gods-in-the-making, and companionship with eternity.
CASE 77: Yun Men’s Cake
A monk asked Yun Men, "What is talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs?" Men said, "Cake."

1. **Talk** = idle stuff that comes out of the mouth
2. **Cake** = stuff that goes in the mouth; stuff that sustains life.

CASE 79: T’ou Tzu’s All Sounds
A monk asked T’ou Tzu, "All sounds are the sounds of Buddha-right or wrong?" T’ou Tzu said, "Right." The monk said, "Teacher, doesn’t your asshole make farting sounds?" T’ou Tzu then hit him.

Again the monk asked, "Coarse words or subtle talk, all returns to the primary meaning-right or wrong?" T’ou Tzu said, "Right." The monk said, "Can I call you an ass, Teacher?" T’ou Tzu then hit him.

1. Hit also made a sound, did the monk hear that; T’ou Tzu hit him a second time, did he hear the sound?
2. ‘All sounds are the sounds of Buddha’. Are = to have identity with, to equal in meaning; a noun-to-noun relationship. The monk inquired about ‘sound’ = noun, but not ‘purpose of sound’ or ‘consciousness associated with sound’; a verb-noun relationship.

CASE 80: Chao Chou’s Newborn Baby
A monk asked Chao Chou, "Does a newborn baby also have the sixth consciousness?" Chao Chou said, "(Like) tossing a ball on swift-flowing water."

The monk also asked T’ou Tzu, "What is the meaning of ‘Tossing a ball on swift-flowing water’?" T’ou Tzu said, "Moment to moment, nonstop flow."

1. **Swift flowing water** of life eventually returns to the vast ocean of consciousness, but not immediately. Spirit’s journey into manifestation continues nonstop until enlightenment.
2. **Sixth consciousness** = conceptual thinking (Case 80 commentary, p 438); the question relates to childlikeness. A child has the potential for abstract conceptual thinking, but it is not developed. A journey into the material world, *like tossing a ball on swift-flowing water*, develops conceptual thinking, and opens the possibility of getting caught in the net of self-identity and things in the world of manifestation. Freedom from the net of identity, conformity, public opinion and the world of manifestation is attained with childlike acceptance and non-attachment to things, be here now, **moment to moment, nonstop flow**.
3. The opera ‘Parsifal’ by Richard Wagner has 3 parts: Act 1, the young childlike, innocent Parsifal readily gain access the Grail Castle (located on Monsalvat; in the etheric region; not physical locations; a level of attainment, see Case 34 and Case 36). But innocence lacks wisdom and is untested in compassion for the suffering of others; Parsifal was tossed out of the Grail Castle. Act 2 is trials in the world of manifestation, test of conviction in the desire to heal the suffering
king. Act 3, Parsifal returns to the higher dimension with added wisdom gained from the journey in the world of manifestation.

CASE 82: Ta Lung’s Hard and Fast Body of Reality
A monk asked Ta Lung, "The physical body rots away: what is the hard and fast body of reality?"
Lung said, "The mountain flowers bloom like brocade, the valley streams are brimming blue as indigo."

1. Our body of reality is the planet Earth. Body is substance and form in which spirit dwells to acquire experience, evolve and expand consciousness. Our reality is from the perspective of Earth, residing in the rarefied region of the outer edge of the Milky Way galaxy; using 5 senses to observe 3 dimensional space. As our consciousness expands, our 'reality' expands beyond Earth, beyond the 5 senses and beyond 3 spatial dimensions.

2. Body, substance and form of Earth must be recycled, so that spirit dwelling in body can continue to progress from death to life, from rot to bloom. In an imaginary world it is easy to ignore recycling, create nothing out of something; garbage disappears; river transport sewage downstream out of sight; the vast ocean covers up plastic and radioactive waste; wind blows away air pollution to somewhere else; rain washes out airborne particulates somewhere; soil somehow decomposes waste in garbage dumps. Discernment in the world of manifestation is that someone, some agency must make the effort to recycle waste. Eventually, the physical body rots away and we reincarnate back on Earth, into the body and garbage of our own creation to continue life where we left off in the previous life.

3. Evolution strives for improvement: to build new and better forms is wonderment, exploration, being creative and participation with expression of spirit; the negative perspective of evolution is unease, stress, anxiety, craving, dissatisfaction that pervades all life forms because form is not spirit. Karma is a manifestation of justice; the negative perspective is punishment and reward. Death is a return to spirit for reassessment of progress and to acquire new instructions for further improvement; the negative perspective is suffering, growing old and dying. The question should be 'what is the reality of spirit' and 'what is the reality of body': the reality of spirit is evolution of consciousness; the reality of body is eventual death, rot and recycling.

CASE 84: Vimalakirti’s Gate of Nonduality
Vimalakirti asked Manjusri, "What is a bodhisattva’s entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?"
Manjusri said, "According to what I think, in all things, no words, no speech, no demonstration and no recognition, to leave behind all questions and answers; this is entering the Dharma gate of nonduality."
Then Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, "We have each already spoken. Now you should tell us, good man, what is a bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality? "
1. Manjusri does not address:
   a. Verb-noun relationships: he answered the question of nonduality by saying no words, no speech, no demonstration and no recognition, to leave behind all questions and answers: no, no, no, no to all those nouns. Nonduality focuses on allowing all things: live in the moment; be here now; non attachment to things. A different way to transcend the duality of opposing forces is through verb-to-noun relationships, evolve with purpose, and act with objective.
   
   b. Manifestation tests discernment between real, theoretical, imaginary and illusion. What is discernment without asking question and yielding answers? Discernment! Is the Dharma gate of nonduality real or illusion?
   
   c. Individual's existence on Earth alters the environment through resource consumption, waste production, and entropy. In the extreme form, humanity brought about climate change, mass extinction of species, pollution, waste accumulation and accelerated entropy. Nonduality focuses away from greed by allowing, be in the moment with nature, avoid picking and choosing, but does not address direct effort to mitigate these environmental problems.
   
   d. We are visually impaired, we see visible light but unable to see cosmic background microwave, infrared, ultraviolet and gamma rays; our hearing is limited to the human audible range but unable to hear infrasound and ultrasound; we have 5 senses instead of 6, 7 or 8 senses; we engage the 3 dimensional space and ignore 4th, 5th, 6th and higher spatial dimensions; our Earth resides in a rarefied outer edge of the Milky Way galaxy, far away from the hot bed of activity with high concentration of stars near the center of the galaxy. Nonduality allows; these limitations will be resolved on their own, somehow.

2. We have each already spoken. Now you should tell us... speak, tell, expound on beliefs, commandments, concepts, data, edicts, facts, information, knowledge, laws, opinions, proclamations, recite the scriptures, rules = nouns; where is verb (build, do, make, serve, work)? Downloading knowledge and wisdom from the mind of god does not add more knowledge and wisdom to the mind of god. The value of wisdom is its utility; wisdom without action is futile; action without wisdom is dangerous.

CASE 92: The World Honored One Ascends the Seat
One day the World Honored One ascended his seat. Manjusri struck the gavel and said, "Clearly behold the Dharma of the King of Dharma; the Dharma of the King of Dharma is thus."
The World Honored One then got down off the seat.

Manjusri struck the gavel and said... an inappropriate introduction. Manjusri projects himself as the herald with announcement, assertion, data, description, fact, information, knowledge, proclamation (King of Dharma, thusness). Where is purpose, activity with objective? What does a person's identity have to do with spiritual awakening? So, the World Honored One the got down off the seat.
CASE 100: Pa Ling’s Blown Hair Sword
A monk asked Pa Ling, "What is the Blown Hair Sword?"
Pa Ling said, "Each branch of coral supports the moon."

1. Reverse the direction: the coral lies below the water surface. When the waves are calm, the light of the moon shines through, revealing the coral. See the truth below the ripple of worldly affairs, cut away confusion and doubt with the sharp sword of discernment, the **Blown Hair Sword**. The Blown Hair Sword of discernment is a beginning step toward attaining the 6th sense and perceiving the 4th spatial dimension. The 3 different spiritual paths (the path of salvation, the path of being, and the path of divinity) all advocate discernment between the real and illusory; meditation to calm the mind; and disentanglement from the material world: three different paths for three different temperaments.

2. **Each branch of coral supports the moon**, as above, so below; reciprocity; do unto others as you want other do unto you; walk a mile in the other persons’ shoes; see the 3 dimensional world from the 4th dimension; cause and effect where the effect becomes the new cause; reverse the direction of descent into matter with ascent to spirit …Learn to disentangle the complexity of manifestation using the principle of 'as above so below', reciprocity, and flexibility in perspective.

* References:


List of top 1500 nouns, of which 800 are used as nouns and as verb can be found at www.talkenglish.com/vocabulary/top-1500-nouns.aspx