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Koans, part 3: Selections from the Book of Equanimity  
Comment by student t  
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The following Zen koans are selected from Shoyo-roku / Book of Serenity / The Book of Equanimity / The Book of Composure / Encouragement (Hermitage) Record by Wanshi Shogaku (Hongzhi Zhengjue) 1091–1157 with Introductions by Bansho Gyoshu (Wansong Xingxiu) 1166-1246. Translated by Sanbo Kyodan Society, 6 September 2014 version (from <https://terebess.hu/zen/shoyo-roku.html>). Introductions are omitted here; see the original for introductions and the complete collection of 100 koans.

Preliminary note:

Noun = a word that names something (person, animal, place, thing, quality, idea or action).

Verb = a word that expresses existence, an act, or occurrence.

In the Book of Equanimity, ‘is’ is the most common verb used in interrogative phrases: what is, when is, where is, who is, how is, is this, are you and are there. Is (be, am, are, was, were) = to equal in meaning, to have identity with, to have objective existence, to live, to take place. The ‘is’ interrogatives used by monks and students usually pertain to noun(1) equivalent to noun(2). The ‘equivalent’ question focus on nouns. Whereas, Zen teachers’ reply usually focus on verb: ‘is’ as an expression of existence, this, thus, now, to be, be here now, be in the moment, this moment, just simply be. At times, a Zen teacher demonstrates ‘is’ by raising a fist, or hold up a whisk, staff or bamboo stick. The difference between the equivalent-is (focusing on nouns) and existence-is (focusing on verb) points to 2 different spiritual paths: (1) ‘the path of salvation’, to finds salvation through noun: person (savior), place (paradise), thing (sacred object), or idea (knowledge, data, fact, gospel, information, law, scripture, sutra); and (2) ‘the path of being’, to be, be here now, be in the moment, be at one with all things. Zen is a path of being.

In the Book of Equanimity, ‘do’ is the second most common verb used in interrogative phrases: why do, what do, where did, how do, and do you. Do (does, did, done) = carry out, perform, execute, and bring about. ‘Do’ points to a third spiritual path, ‘the path of divinity’: to participate with other divine hierarchies and become co-creators in building the universe. Do, work, build, make, and labor: develop 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. “The path of salvation’, ‘the path of being’, and ‘the path of divinity’ are three different spiritual paths for three different temperaments.

Selected cases from The Book of Equanimity, a collection of 100 koans: Texts in bold are direct quotes from various sources; texts in normal type are student t’s notes and comments.
Case 3: The Indian King Invites the Patriarch

A king of Eastern India invited the twenty-seventh patriarch, Prajna Tara for a meal. The king asked, "Why don't you recite sutras?" The patriarch said, "The poor way [1] does not stay in the world of subject when breathing in, and has nothing to do with the world of objects when breathing out. I am always reciting the “Such-as-this”-sutra in millions and millions of volumes."

[1]: i.e., "I."

1. **sutra** = scripture that contains the Buddha's teaching.
2. **Why don't you recite sutras?:** sutras, commandments, data, facts, gospel, information, knowledge, laws, news, opinions, rules, scripture, wisdom, word,... are all nouns. Where is verb? Live the life that you believe in rather than recite sutras, data, facts, gospel or wisdom. Wisdom without activity is futile; activity without wisdom is dangerous.
3. **...the world of subject...the world of objects** = nouns. **...breathing in...breathing out** = verb. Prajna Tara focused on verb (breathing) whereas the king focused on nouns (sutra, subject, object)
4. **Such-as-this** (= **suchness**, 2004 translation) this, thus, be, be in the moment while breathing in and out; in contrast to reciting sutras from documents, or talking about sutras.
5. Poetry is not river. You can describe river with words and eloquent poetry but river supports aquatic life, transport water, nutrients, sediments and cargo, generate hydro power, and provide space for recreation. Sutras that describe, but life is more than description of things, data, facts, information, knowledge or rules. The purpose of being in the world of manifestation is (a) to find salvation through faith, for those who follow the path of salvation; (b) to be at one with all things, for those who follow the path of being; and (c) to build widgets and individual character through work, for those who follow the path of divinity.

Case 7: Yakusan Ascends the Rostrum

Yakusan had not ascended the rostrum for a long time. The temple steward said, "All the assembly has been wishing for instruction for a long time. Please, Master, give your assembly a sermon."

Yakusan had the bell rung. The assembly gathered. Yakusan ascended the rostrum and sat there for a while. Then he descended and returned to his room.

The temple steward followed him and asked, "You said a while ago that you would give the assembly a sermon. Why didn't you speak even a word?" Yakusan said, "For sutras, there are sutra specialists; for sastras [1], there are sastra specialists. Why do you have doubts about this old monk [2] ?"

[1]: Books on Buddhist doctrines, written by ancient Buddhist philosophers.
[2]: i.e. Yakusan.
Yaoshan...sat there for a while: silence, this moment, thus, to be, be here now. Yaoshan gave a sermon on being in the moment by being in the moment, in silence.

Case 10: An Old Woman near Taizan [1]

There was an old woman on the way to Taizan. Whenever a monk asked her how to get to Taizan, she would answer, "Go straight on." After the monk had gone a few steps, she would say, "This good and naïve fellow goes off that way, too."

Later a monk told Joshu about this. Joshu said, "Wait a bit. I will go and see through her for you." He went and asked the same question.

The next day, Joshu ascended the rostrum and said, "I have seen through the old woman for you."

[1]: case 31 Mumonkan (also called The Gateless Gate, book of 48 koans collected by Mumon)

1. Go straight on: straight on to a physical location; or straight on to the desired level of attainment by going straight without deviating; stay focus on the path.
2. I have seen through the old woman for you, and the path is as she had said, 'go straight on', stay focus on the path.

Case 11: Unmon's "Two Diseases"

Great Master Unmon said, "When the light does not penetrate, there are two diseases. Everything is unclear and things hang before you: this is one disease. Even after you have realized the emptiness of all things, somehow you feel as if there were still something there. This shows that the light has not yet penetrated thoroughly.

Also there are two diseases concerning the Dharma-body. You have reached the Dharma-body, but you remain attached to the Dharma and cannot extinguish your own view; therefore you lead a corrupt life around the Dharma-body: this is one disease. Suppose you have truly penetrated to the end, if you give up further efforts, it will not do. You examine yourself minutely and say you have no flaw: this is nothing but a disease."

Book of Serenity, T Cleary translation: Great Master Yunmen said, "When the light does not penetrate freely, there are two kinds of sickness. One is when all places are not clear and there is something before you. Having penetrated the emptiness of all things, subtly it seems like there is something--this too is the light not penetrating freely. Also, the Dharma-body has two kinds of sickness: one is when you manage to reach the Dharma-body, but because your clinging to Dharma is not forgotten, your sense of self still remains, and you fall into the realm of the Dharma-body. Even if you can pass through, if you let go, that won't do. Examining carefully, to think 'What breath is there?'--this too is sickness."
The True Dharma Eye, case 107, T Cleary translation: Yunmen said, “When light does not penetrate fully, there are two types of sickness. One is that in facing objects it is still not clear if there is something before you. The other is that even having understood the emptiness of all things, in a subtle way there is still something that seems like an object; this is also a case where light has not fully penetrated.

“There are also two types of sickness regarding the dharma body. One is that even having reached the dharma body, one abides at the margins of the dharma body because attachments to self-view still persist. The other is that even having penetrated it, one cannot let go of having penetrated it. You should examine this state carefully and see what kind of freedom you are really breathing, as this kind of freedom is also a sickness.”

1. ...the emptiness of all things: empty = no thing; a state prior to manifestation of things; the unmanifest all potential of spirit; space without reference to things or motion.
2. ... there were still something there: expectation of something where there is no thing; incomplete realization of the state of 'no things'.
3. The first disease is lack of understanding, everything is unclear. The second disease is attachments to person, place, things, ideas, goals, dharma and own views (= nouns): expectations, attachment to your sense of self, attachment to goal, or you have no flaw. The resolution is verb (be, build, do, evolve, live, work) instead of give up further efforts or disinterest in work.

Case 12: Jizo Plants the Rice Field

Jizo asked Shuzanshu, “Where have you come from?” Shuzanshu said, “I have come from the South.” Jizo said, “How is the Buddha-Dharma in the South these days?” Shuzanshu said, “There is much lively mondo and discussion.”

Jizo said, “How could that match with our planting the rice field here and making rice-balls to eat?” Shuzanshu said, “How could you then save the beings of the Three Worlds?” Jizo said, “What would you call 'the Three Worlds'?”

1. where have you come from? = a physical location; or a state of consciousness. Shuzanshu replied with a physical location.
2. There is much lively discussion: talk and more talk; lively discussion and talking about 'Buddha-Dharma' are not being in the state of buddha consciousness. Poetry is not river; talking about river does not support aquatic life or generate hydro power. How does talking about Buddha-Dharma...match with our planting the rice field here?
3. What about the three worlds? (past, present, future): more talk, comments, description, data, facts, information, knowledge, opinions, words (= nouns). Poetry is not river.
4. Nouns and verbs: widgets, molecules, laws, words, information and data are noun. Planting, making, work, build and do are verbs. -
   a. Lord of the Rings by JRR Tolkein, Fellowship of the Ring, Farewell to Lorien, p 361: ‘Are these magic cloaks?, asked Pippin, looking at them with wonder. ‘I do not know what you mean by that,’ answered
the leader of the Elves... ‘They are elvish robes certainly, if that is what you mean. Leaf and branch, water and stone: they have the hue and beauty of all these things under the twilight of Lorien that we love; for we put the thought of all that we love into all that we make.

b. How does lively discussion compare with put the thought of all that we love into all that we make?

Case 16: Mayoku Shook the Ring-Staff [1]

Mayoku, with his ring-staff in hand, came to Shokei. He circled Shokei's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Shokei said, "Right, right!" Mayoku then came to Nansen. He circled Nansen's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Nansen said, "Not right, not right!" Then, Mayoku said, "Master Shokei said, 'Right, right!' Why, Master, do you say, 'Not right, not right!?'" Nansen said, "With Shokei it is right, but with you it is not right. This is nothing but a whirling of the wind. In the end, it will perish."

[1]: case 31 Hekiganroku (also called The Blue Cliff Record, a book of 100 koans collected by Yuan-wu)

1. Fulfillment of ceremonial gestures depends on audience (Shokei and Nansen) as well as performer (Mayoku). Who will awaken with each rotation of earth about its axis, each moon orbit around the earth and each earth orbit around the sun?

2. Earth orbits around the sun and provides a platform for life to evolve on the planet; ceremonial representation of earth’s orbit by a dancer with ring-staff is symbolic, like poetry about river. But poetry is not river; ceremonial orbit is not earth orbit: in the end, it will perish.

Case 17: Hogen’s "Hairsbreadth"

Hogen asked Shuzanshu [1], "'If there is only a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth.' [2] How do you understand that?" Shuzanshu said, "If there is only a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth." Hogen said, "If that's your understanding, how could you ever attain It?" Shuzanshu said, "My view is just that. How about you, Master?" Hogen said, "If there only is a hairsbreadth of difference, it is the distance between heaven and earth." Shuzanshu made a deep bow.

[1] Hogen and Shuzanshu were both disciples of Jizo Keishin Zenji. Hogen was obviously older.


1. distance = manifestation and separation of things in space. Spirit is prior to manifestation, prior to separating things, heaven, earth and distance.
2. The understanding of ‘hairsbreadth’ is: ‘is’ without further explanation of ‘is’; ‘it’ without further explanation of ‘it’. **Hairsbreadth** and **distance** identifies consciousness in the realm of manifestation, things and separation of things by distance; separation between subject and object, between heaven and earth, and between spirit and matter. **Distance** establishes a duality between spirit and matter. To accept **distance** is to accept duality and not ‘being-at-one-with-all things’ or ‘be-in-the-moment’.

3. The difference between ‘is’ (**if there is…**) and ‘do’ (**how do you…**) 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). The path of salvation separates person (self) and the source of salvation, salvation via person (the spiritual master, teacher, guru, or savior), place (Shangri-La, paradise, heaven), sacred things and idea (scripture, teaching, or word of God). The path of salvation participates in duality; not a Zen path.
   b. ‘Is’ = to have objective existence, to live, to take place, to occur, or ‘thus’. ‘Is’ points to the subject of the sentence: I am. The path of being: be in the moment; just simply be; non intervention; allow, without classification, discrimination, judgment or reference to identity; to be in spirit, prior to thought, prior to separation of things with distances; be at one with all things; super consciousness; nonduality, without separating **heaven and earth**. Zen is a path of being.
   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 universe. 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; instead of escaping Earth. The path of divinity is transforming, devising and implementing evolution, making widgets, shuffling molecules, intervention; not a Zen path.

Case 19: Unmon's "Mt. Sumeru"

A monk asked Unmon, "Not a single thought arises: is there any fault or not?" Unmon said, "Mt. Sumeru. [1]"

Book of Serenity, T Cleary translation: A monk asked Yunmen, "When not producing a single thought, is there any fault or not?" Yumen said, "Mount Sumeru."

[1]: The highest and most massive mountain in the world according to the Indian cosmology.
1. **Thought** participate in manifestation. Spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes observation of manifestation; observation of manifestation precedes thought that analyze and catalyze observation; thought that analyze and catalyze precede wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge that is tested by nature, gravity, karma, reciprocity, and harmony. Thought and wisdom participate in manifestation.

2. **Not a single thought arises** = prior to thought, prior to manifestation, empty, no thing, spirit, and space without reference to things.

3. **is there any fault or not?**: determination of fault requires analysis and comparison between nouns (person, place, thing, idea). The question is self contradictory: being at one with all things is a state prior to thought where **not a single thought arises**; prior-to-thought is not subject to analysis-by-thought.

4. **Mt Sumeru** = is, thus, be here now.

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**Case 20: Jizo's "Most Intimate"**

(2004 translation): Jizo asked Hogen, "Where are you going, senior monk? [1]" Hogen said, "I am on pilgrimage [2], following the wind." Jizo said, "What are you on pilgrimage for?" Hogen said, "I don't know." Jizo said, "Non knowing is most intimate." Hogen suddenly attained great enlightenment.


[1]: "Senior monk" (joza) is an honorific for a monk who has practiced more than 10 years.

[2]: Originally: anya.

1. **where are you going?**: to a physical location (noun); or activity of wandering (verb)

2. **What are you on pilgrimage for?... I don't know**: 'not know' is a beginning step in doubt and a beginning step to 'be in the moment' instead of using mind to analyze and to know.
   a. Hogen follows the path of being: to be in the moment, now, without separating time into past, present and future and without reference to wisdom, knowledge or thought. The past cannot be changed; the future is not yet here: be here now, be in the moment, and be at one with all things, super consciousness. The path of being does not dwell in the past; there is no nostalgia, retribution, revenge or judgment of past crime, wrong doing, guilt, remorse, forgiveness, fault or repentance; no judicial system or karma. The path of being does not dwell in the future, there is no speculation, gambling, goal to be attained, or plan for evolution. Now, super consciousness allows karma and evolution to unfold without intervention.
b. Hogen does not follow the path of divinity that requires separating time into past, present and future. The scientific method analyzes and catalyzes past observation to formulate theories about the present and make predictions about the future. Karma and social justice weighs past actions and dispense corrective measures for present and future conduct. Wisdom derives from knowledge that is tested against nature, karma and harmony. Intervention, wisdom, karma, justice, the scientific method and the path of divinity requires separating time into past, present and future; not a Zen path.

c. Hogen does not follow the path of salvation: to have faith in salvation through a master, guru, savior, or God. I don't know is an expression of doubt, not an expression of faith.

3. **Non knowing** = to be outside of mind, a state without using mind to analyze and catalyze sensory perceptions about the external world. Three categories: know, not know (ignorance) and non-knowing (without use of mind). Examples of non-knowing include being, feeling, dreaming, love, compassion, intuition, imagination and will.

**Case 21: Ungan Sweeps the Ground**

When Ungan was sweeping the ground, Dogo said, "You are having a hard time!" Ungan said, "You should know there is one who doesn't have a hard time." Dogo said, "If that's true, you mean there is a second moon?" Ungan held up his broom and said, "What number of moon is this?" Dogo was silent.

Gensha said, "That is precisely the second moon."

Unmon said, "The servant greets the maid politely."

1. Are there 2 kinds of work: hard work and easy work? Is, be, be here now and to be in the moment do not separate 'work' into 'easy work' and 'hard work'.
2. **you mean there is a second moon?** = is there one kind of work, or 2 kind of work; is there 1 moon or 2 moon.

**Case 31: Unmon's "Pillar" [1]**

Unmon, instructing the assembly, said, "The old buddha and a pillar intersect each other. What number of activity is that?" The assembly was silent. He said on their behalf, "Clouds gather over the South Mountain; rain falls on the North Mountain."

Book of Serenity, T Cleary translation: Yunmen said, "The ancient Buddhas are merged with the open pillars--what level of activity is this?" The assembly was speechless. Yunmen himself said for them, "On South Mountain rising clouds, on North Mountains falling rain."

[1]: case 83 Hekiganroku.
1. When spirit (buddha) and matter (pillar) intersect, activity arises: clouds gather and rain falls; nature evolve; earth rotates and provide a platform for evolution of life.

2. What number of activity is that? = how much activity is that; or ‘What level of activity is that’. The ‘number of activity’ is called evolution with purpose. The purpose of spirit dwelling in matter, of buddha intersecting pillars, is to experience, evolve, and develop individual character of thoroughness, observation, patience, persistence, love and compassion. If evolution has no purpose then evolution leads to entropy, the degradation of matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity. Zen simplifies evolution and purpose into being, now, super consciousness, and non intervention; leave things well enough alone.

Case 32: Kyozan's Mind and Objective World

Kyozan asked a monk, "Where do you come from?" The monk said, "I am from Yu Province" Kyozan said, "Do you think of that place?" The monk said, "I always do." Kyozan said, "That which thinks is the mind [1]. That which is thought about is the objective world. Within that are mountains, rivers and the great earth, towers, palaces, people, animals, and other things. Reflect upon the mind that thinks. Are there a lot of things there?" The monk said, "I don't see anything at all there." Kyozan said, "That's right for the stage of understanding, but not yet for the stage of personalization." The monk said, "Do you have any special advice, Master?" Kyozan said, "It is not right to say that there is or there is not. Your insight shows that you have obtained only one side of the mystery. Sitting down, putting on clothes, from now on you see by yourself."

Book of Serenity, T Cleary translation: Yangshan asked a monk, "Where are you from?" The monk said, "From Yu province. Yangshan said, "Do you think of that place?" The monk said, "I always think of it. Yangshan said, "The thinker is the mind and the thought-of is the environment. Therein are mountains, rivers, and the land mass, buildings, towers, halls and chambers, people, animals, and so forth; reverse your thought to think of the thinking mind--are there so many things there?" The monk said, "When I get here, I don't see any existence at all." Yangshan said, "This is right for the stage of faith, but not yet right for the stage of person." The monk said, "Don't you have any other particular way of guidance?" Yangshan said, "To say that I have anything particular or not would not be accurate. Based on your insight, you only get one mystery--you can take the seat and wear the robe. After this, see on your own."

[1]: Originally: kokoro.

1. Where do you come from?: a physical location; or state of consciousness
2. That which is thought about is the objective world, the mind analyze and catalyze sensory perceptions; the senses perceive the world of manifestation; within the world of manifestation 'are mountains, rivers and the great earth, towers, palaces, people, animals and other things'.
3. **Reflect upon the mind that thinks** = the mind thinks and reflect on sensory perceptions; sensory perceptions are observations of the **objective world**. **Thoughts** about perceptions are 2 step removed from the **objective world**; perceptions are 1 step removed from the **objective world**. To be in the moment is to be at one with the **objective world**; no step removed. The objective world does not depend on perception, mind, or **understanding**.

4. **Personalization** = I am, to be in the moment, to be at one with all things.

5. **Sitting down** (by yourself), **putting on clothes** (by yourself), from now on you see by yourself.

   a. Quotes from Lord of the Ring by JRR Tolkein: Fellowship of the Ring, The Shadow of the Past, p60, Gandalf to Frodo: ‘...And now,’ said the wizard, turning back to Frodo, ‘the decision lies with you. But I will always help you.’

   b. Fellowship of the Ring, Three is Company, p82: Gildor to Frodo: ‘...the choice is yours: to go or wait’

   c. Fellowship of the Ring, The Council of Elrond, p264, Elrond to Frodo: ‘But it is a heavy burden. So heavy that none could lay it on another. I do not lay it on you. But if you take it freely, I will say that your choice is right.’

   d. Fellowship of the Ring, The Ring goes South, p268: Elrond to Frodo: ‘...Do you still hold to your word, Frodo, that you will be the Ring-bearer?’

   e. Fellowship of the Ring, The Ring goes South, p273-4: Elrond to the fellowship: ‘The Ring-bearer is setting out on the Quest of Mount Doom...The others go with him as free companions, to help him on his way...no oath or bond is laid on you to go further than you will.’

   f. Fellowship of the Ring, The Mirror of Galadriel, p 354: Galadriel and Frodo: ‘Do you advise me to look?’ asked Frodo. ‘No,’ she said, ‘I do not counsel you one way or the other... Do as you will’

   g. Fellowship of the Ring, Farewell to Lorien, p358: Celeborn to the fellowship: ‘I see that you do not yet know what to do', said Celeborn. ‘It is not my part to choose for you; but I will now help you as I may’...

   h. Fellowship of the Ring, The Breaking of the Fellowship, p 394: Aragorn to the fellowship: ‘I do not think that it is our part to drive him one way or the other.’

   i. The Two Towers, Treebeard, p 455: Treebeard to Pippin: ‘I am not going to do anything with you; not if you mean by that ‘do something to you’ without your leave. We might do some things together.’

   j. The Two Towers, The King of the Golden Hall, p509: Gandalf to Theoden: ‘Give him a horse and let him go at once, whether he chooses. By his choice you shall judge him.’

   k. The Two Towers, The Voice of Saruman, p 568: Gandalf to Saruman: ‘I am giving you a last chance. You can leave Orthanc, free, if you choose.’

   l. Return of the King, The Passing of the Grey Company, p 764: Aragorn to Gimli and Legolas: ‘But I do not go gladly; only need drives me. Therefore only of your free will would I have you come.'
m. Return of the King, Homeward Bound, p 974: Gandalf to the 4 hobbits: ‘I am with you at present, said Gandalf, ‘but soon I shall not be. I am not coming to the Shire. You must settle its affairs yourselves; that is what you have been trained for.’ (= from now on you see by yourself)

Case 34: Fuketsu's "Speck of Dust" [1]

Fuketsu, giving instruction, said, "If one raises a speck of dust, the house and the nation prosper. If one does not raise a speck of dust, they perish."

Setcho held up his staff and said, "Is there anyone who lives and dies with this?"

[1]: case 61 Hekiganroku.

1. dust = obstruction arising from analysis of sensory perception using mind. Thought has 2 parts, analyze and catalyze. Omitted in the understanding of dust is the second part of thought, to catalyze, intervene, reassemble and inspire, using mind.
2. raise a speck of dust = to remove and see beyond dust and obstructions of mind, then the house and nation prosper.
3. held up his staff = this, thus, is, to be in the moment, be here now. Staff is what Fuketsu had on hand, but he could have held up a whisk, fist, bamboo stick or whatever else available. If nothing readily available, then the reply: ‘Mt Sumeru’ would suffice (case 19).
4. Is there anyone who lives and dies by being in the moment?

Case 37: Isan's "Karma-Consciousness"

Isan asked Kyozan, "Suppose a man asks you, saying, 'All living beings are tossed in a vast karma-consciousness, and have no foundation to rely upon.' How would you check him?' Kyozan said, "If such a monk appears, I call out to him, 'Mr. So-and-so!' When he turns his head, instantly I say, 'What is this?' If he hesitates, then I say to him, 'Not only is there a vast karma-consciousness, but also there is no foundation to rely upon.'" Isan said, "Good."

1. karma-consciousness relies on manifestation, activity, things, time separated into past, present and future, the consequences of past activity and understanding reciprocity to guide present and future actions.
2. no foundation to rely upon= a state prior to manifestation, activity, things and prior to time; to be at one with all things, super consciousness. Karma-consciousness is a fragment of super consciousness. On this planet, activity is governed by the law of karma, but prior to planet, foundation, things and time is spirit. Spirit is not attached to foundations, planets, things, time or karma.
3. 'All living beings are tossed in a vast karma-consciousness, and have no foundation to rely upon.' The sentence is paradoxical, the first phrase time
separated into past, present and future; while the second phrase time is ‘now’ without separating into past, present and future: **how would you check him?**

4. ...**I call out to him, ‘Mr. So-and-so!’** = will he self identify with his name. What if you lose your social identity, your documentations, identity papers, birth certificate, passport, personal identification number, proof of residency, tax record, and bank account are you a person? You are human, but are you a participatory member of a social community, of humanity, of the planetary community living on earth, a member of life in the Milky Way Galaxy, a member of lesser gods, or spirit? What is your identity, **Mr. So-and-so**?
   a. For those who follow the path of being, yes you can live as ‘anonymous’ without identity. Thus, to be, this moment, now... are states of consciousness without preconditions, judgment, prejudice, analysis, interpretation or identity.
   b. For those who follow the path of salvation, maybe you can live as ‘anonymous’ without identity. Your salvation and faith is between you and your god, savior, master, guru or teacher. However, if there are required gatherings, pilgrimages, dress code, or proselytizing, then your identity is known.
   c. For those who follow the path of divinity, you do not live as ‘anonymous’. To become an assistant in building the universe requires active participation and coordination with other members of lesser gods. The student receives guidance and test of character through craftsmanship, through building widgets, shuffling molecules; tested by nature, gravity, karma, reciprocity, justice and harmony with the worlds.
   d. The misfits, homeless, exiled, outcasts, and expelled can remain as anonymous or try to regain membership in a community, membership of life in the Milky Way galaxy, member of lesser gods, or realized spirit.
   e. What identity do you conform to **Mr. So-and-so**; or none, anonymous: conformity and identity are not relevant to being in the moment. Identity promotes separation and detracts from being at one with all.

5. **what is this** (moment)? do you separate time into past, present, and future; is there hesitation.

6. If someone recites the paradoxical statement that contains reference to fragmented time and unified time, **check him** by calling out his name (what is his identity) and ask ‘**what is this** moment’ (is time fragmented or unified). **If he hesitates**, then recite the paradoxical statement for his further contemplation. **Isan said, "Good."**

7. ‘The path of being’, now, is, to be at one with all things, to be in the moment; the path of being does not promote or deny **karma-consciousness**. We cannot change the past; the future is not yet here; if you do something, do the best that you can and be in the moment, now.

Case 38: Rinzai's "True Person"

Rinzai instructed his assembly and said, "There is one true person of no rank, always coming out and going in through the gates of your face [1]. Beginners who have not yet witnessed that, look! look!"
Then a monk came out and asked, "What is the one true person of no rank?" Rinzai descended from the rostrum and grabbed him. The monk hesitated. Rinzai pushed him away and said, "The true person of no rank -- what a shit-stick you are!"

[1]: I.e., sense organs such as eyes, nose, ears, tongue, etc.

1. **one true person of no rank** = the spirit dwelling within the person, spirit without identity, class, rank or social status.
2. **gates of your face**: sensory perception of the world; or limitations (gate) according to social status and rank.
3. **what is**... focus on thing, name of idea (noun) instead of being, doing, **coming, going, look** (verb).
4. The question **what is the one true person of no rank** = 'what is spirit', and the answer 'is'; 'is' without further comment.

Case 42: Nanyo and the Water Jug

A monk asked National Teacher Chu of Nanyo, "What is the essential body [1] of Vairocana Buddha [2]?

National Teacher said, "Pass me that water jug." The monk passed him the water jug. National Teacher said, "Put it back where it was." The monk asked again, "What is the essential body of Vairocana Buddha?" National Teacher said, "The old Buddha is long gone."

[1]: The so-called "Dharma-body" or dharmakaya.
[2]: The principal Buddha.

1. **Pass me that water jug;...put it back where it was**: the question about Vairocana Buddha is coming and going, back and forth, this and that, pass and put it back; a question about information, fact, data, knowledge. What does knowledge have to do with now, being in the moment?
2. **The old buddha has been long gone**: be here now, be in the moment; let the dead bury the dead.

Case 43: Razan's "Appearing and Disappearing"

Razan asked Ganto, "What if things appear and disappear without ceasing?" Ganto scolded him saying, "Who appears and disappears?"

1. **things appear and disappear** = manifestation.
2. **What** refers to thing, or idea. **Who** refers to person, in this case, the spirit self. Stay focus on the spirit (who, who are you) instead of things, idea or manifestation.

Case 44: Koyo's "Suparnin"
A monk asked Master Ho of Koyo, "The great dragon has emerged from the ocean, calming heaven and earth. How will you treat him when he suddenly appears before you?" Master Ho said, "Suparnin [1], the king of birds, absorbs the entire universe. Who can stick his head within him?" The monk said, "But how about when he does appear?" Ho said, "It is like a falcon catching a pigeon. If you don't realize it, you will learn the truth through the 'inspection before the balcony.' [2]" The monk said, "If so, then I'll fold my hands on my chest and retreat three steps." Ho said, "You black tortoise under the Sumeru altar. [3] Don't wait to be struck on the forehead again and get hurt."

[1]: A giant bird that eats even dragons.
[2]: A reference to a story in which Heigenkun Chosho, the brother of the king of Cho and a wealthy landlord with 3,000 dependents, built a grand palace with a balcony that overlooked the main road. One day a crippled person was passing by and one of the concubines saw him and laughed. The crippled person was angered and demanded Heigenkun her head. Heigenkun presented the head of an executed convict as the head of the concubine. His dependents knew of his deception, lost faith in their master and gradually all left him. His fortunes declined, so at last he cut off the head of the concubine and presented it for the crippled person to inspect. After that the dependents returned and his fortunes were restored. The story is an allusion to the fact that you can never hide away the real truth.
[3]: A reference to one of the four carved figures, representing black tortoises, underneath the Sumeru altar (with the Buddha statue). It is used here as a symbol of someone who has lost the freedom of movement.

1. **Suparnin absorbs the entire universe** = who is 'outside' the entire universe, and is able to stick his head 'within' the universe if Suparnin absorb the entire universe?
2. **I'll fold my hand on my chest and retreat three steps** = I will stand outside the universe and observe evolution but will not participate in activity, evolution or building. The observer is not the observation; poetry is not river. Wisdom without activity is futile; activity without wisdom is dangerous.
3. **Don't wait to be struck on the forehead again and get hurt.** = How will the observer evolve by folding hands and retreating?

Case 45: Four Phrases from the Engaku Sutra
The Engaku [1] Sutra says:
"At all times, you do not raise the delusive mind. When there are all kinds of illusory thoughts, you do not extinguish them. Dwelling in the delusory state of mind, you do not add understanding. Where there is no understanding, you do not distinguish the truth."

Book of Serenity, T Cleary translation:"At all times do not produce delusive thoughts, also don't try to stop and annihilate deluded states of mind; in
realms of false conception don't add knowledge, and don't find reality in no knowledge."

[1]: "Engaku" means the perfect awakening of Buddha.

1. Poetry is not river. Poetry and thoughts about sensory perception are 2 steps removed from river and the objective world; sensory perception is one step removed from river and the objective world; being at one with all things is no step removed from river and the objective world.

2. The path of being: be here now, be at one with all things without agitating the mind. If thoughts arise, do not extinguish them; there is no gain in battle or argument with thoughts.

3. **Dwelling in the delusory state of mind, you do not add understanding.** This refers to mind that analyze. But thought has 2 parts, analyze and catalyze. Catalyze and co-create are omitted in 'delusory state of mind'

4. Be at one with all things, allow nature to reveal truth.

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**Case 51: Hogen's "Boat or Land"

Hogen asked Senior Monk Kaku, "Did you come by boat or by land?"

Kaku said, "By boat." Hogen said, "Where is the boat?" Kaku said, "The boat is on the river."

After Kaku had withdrawn, Hogen asked a monk nearby, "You tell me, did that monk who was here just now have the eye or not?"

1. **come** =arrive, attain, awaken, reach, realize this level of consciousness.

2. **come by boat (water) or by land (earth)** reference to the 5 changes (wuxing) in Chinese philosophy: five elements, five phases, five planets, five directions, five ways, five movements, five steps or five changes. The following table is extracted from Wikipedia <Wuxing (Chinese philosophy)>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>elements</th>
<th>wood</th>
<th>fire</th>
<th>earth, center, pivot</th>
<th>metal</th>
<th>water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>phases</td>
<td>spring</td>
<td>summer</td>
<td>center, pivot</td>
<td>fall</td>
<td>winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>planets</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>Mars</td>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directions</td>
<td>east</td>
<td>south</td>
<td>center, pivot</td>
<td>west</td>
<td>north</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mental quality</td>
<td>idealism, spontaneity, curiosity</td>
<td>passion, intensity</td>
<td>agreeableness, honesty</td>
<td>intuition, rationality, mind</td>
<td>erudite, wit, resourceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotions</td>
<td>anger, kindness</td>
<td>hate, resolve</td>
<td>anxiety, joy</td>
<td>grief, bravery</td>
<td>fear, gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control or overcome</td>
<td>wood parts earth</td>
<td>fire melts metal</td>
<td>earth dams water</td>
<td>metal cuts wood</td>
<td>water extinguish fire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **by boat or by land**: Kaku focused on boat, land and river (nouns) instead of come, arrive, attain, move, change, turning, or wuxing (verb). Hogen’s challenge is earth controls or overcome water: earth, land, center, pivot, honesty, anxiety and joy controls or overcomes water, boat, winter, wit, fear and gentle.
4. **did that monk have the eye or not**: the question refer to comprehension instead of visual perception since the monk visually saw things, boat, river, and Hogen.

**Case 52: Sozan's "Dharma-body"**

Sozan asked Elder Toku, "'The true Dharma-body of Buddha is like the empty sky. It manifests its form corresponding to things -- just like the moon on the water.' [1] How do you explain the principle of this corresponding?" Toku said, "It is like a donkey looking into a well." Sozan said, "You put it in a nice way, but you were able to say only eighty percent." Toku said, "How about you, Master?" Sozan said, "It is like a well looking at a donkey."

[1]: A quotation from a sutra.

1. **Empty sky** (= *space*, Book of Serenity, T Cleary translation) empty sky is space; whereas cloud occupy space, cloud is not space. Empty sky allows things, gas, dust, water vapor and clouds to move in and out of space without interference, analysis, interpretation, judgment or prejudice of what moves in and out.
2. **moon on the water** = water reflects whatever comes into view; water reflects moon without interference, analysis, interpretation, judgment or prejudice.
3. **a donkey looking at a well** = The donkey uses eyes to see the well, interpret image reflected by the well; the donkey can turn around to look behind or to its side.
4. **a well looking at the donkey** = The well reflects without interference, analysis, interpretation, judgment or prejudice of what moves in and out of view. The well does not have eyes, cannot turn around and look.
5. During meditation, allow whatever comes into view without interference, analysis, interpretation, judgment, prejudice or opinion. This is a beginning step to view the Memory of Nature (Akashic Record). The Memory of Nature is the earth’s account of what had occurred in the past, the feelings and context of the event as recorded by the planet. One could view the birth and death of Buddha, the birth and death of Zoroaster, the birth and death (and resurrection) of Jesus etc. as recorded by the planet; rather than listening to someone recite scripture or offer a second, third, fourth, fifth...hand account of the occurrence.

**Case 57: Gon'yo's One "Thing"**

Venerable Gon'yo asked Joshu, "How is it when a person does not have a single thing?" Joshu said, "Throw it away." Gon'yo said, "I say I don't have a single thing. What could I ever throw away?" Joshu said, "If so, carry it around with you."

1. **I don't have a single thing**: Gon'yo referred to 'thing' as object or possession; whereas Joshu referred 'it' to person, place, thing, idea: self identity (person), location in space occupied by the person, social standing or rank in society.
(place), manifestation of things and accumulated knowledge of the world of manifestation (ideas).

2. **throw it away...carry it with you** = throw away your identity/carry your identity with you; throw away your expectations/carry your expectations with you; throw away your preconceived knowledge/carry your preconceived knowledge of the world with you...

3. See 'Introduction: You play with the shadow to change the original form, Without knowing that it is the original form that is the source of the shadow. You raise your voice to stop an echo, Without knowing that it is the voice that is the root of the echo.'

**Case 59: Seirin's "Deadly Snake"**

A monk asked Seirin, "How is it when a practitioner goes along a narrow path?" Seirin said, "You will meet a deadly snake on the great road. I advise you not to run into it." The monk said, "What if I do run into it?" Seirin said, "You will lose your life." The monk said, "What if I don't run into it?" Seirin said, "You have no place to escape from it." The monk said, "Precisely at such a time, what then?" Seirin said, "It is lost." The monk said, "I wonder where it is gone." Seirin said, "The grass is so deep, there is no place to look for it." The monk said, "You too, Master, must be watchful in order to get it." Seirin clapped his hands and said, "This fellow is equally poisonous."

1. **deadly snake** = attachment (to things, to manifestations, and to nouns).

2. **You have no place to escape from it** = in the world of manifestation there is always the opportunity to become attached to things. The student strives to be in the world but not of the world; to see without becoming attached to things that are seen.

3. **This fellow is equally poisonous** = the monk is attached to things, person (self identity), place (social standing), ideas (knowledge of the world) and name of activity (speech).

**Case 62: Beiko's "Enlightenment"**

Beiko had a monk ask Kyozan, "Do people these days really need enlightenment or not?" Kyozan said, "It is not that there is no enlightenment, but how can it be helped that it falls into the second class?"

The monk went back to Beiko and told him about it. Beiko deeply agreed.

1. **It is not that there is no enlightenment.** This sentence contains a double negative: 'not' and 'no'. The 2 negatives cancel, effectively leaving the phrase 'there is enlightenment'. Kyozan's double negatives draws attention to 'duality' of enlightenment and no enlightenment; and duality of Beiko's question 'need enlightenment or not'. Enlightenment = noun, name of idea or name of activity.

2. **secondary** = provisional, shadow, reflection, image

3. **...it falls into the secondary class**: the secondary class is in the process of attaining some fragment of enlightenment.
4. When inquiring about duality of 2 nouns (enlightenment or not enlightenment) or duality of 2 verbs (fall or not fall), do not overlook the third category of verb-noun relationship; such as attain-enlightenment, awaken-consciousness, walk-path, find-purpose, test-discernment, allow-wisdom, be-creative, act with objective, labor in vineyard. Duality arises from 2 opposing nouns or 2 opposing verbs, but verb-noun relationships do not form dualities. The English language has over 800 words can be used as both noun and verb. Rock, soil, air, water, fire, sound, light, hand, eye and wish are both noun and verb; they are not antithesis to themselves; rock is not antithesis to rock; soil is not antithesis to soil; air is not antithesis to air, noun is not antithesis to verb; verb-noun relationships do not form dualities.

5. The answer to the question is 'yes': be, aspire, acquire, transform, attain, becoming... (verb). Enlightenment (noun) derives from activity, 'to be'.

6. Purpose and evolution are absent in this discussion.
   a. For those who follow the path of salvation, purpose is faith and devotion to the savior, master, and guru. When you do something, do it as if your lord is watching.
   b. For those who follow the path of being, purpose is to be in the moment, to be at one with all things. When you do something, do the best you can, be in the moment.
   c. For those who follow the path of divinity, purpose is to cooperate with lesser gods in building the world and in so doing, build the individual's character (thoroughness, diligence, persistence, patience). When you do something, do it as a lesser-god-in-the-making, a co-creator of the universe.

Case 66: Kyuho's "Head and Tail"

A monk asked Kyuho, "What is the head?" Kyuho said, "Opening the eyes and not perceiving the dawn." The monk said, "What is the tail?" Kyuho said, "Not sitting on a ten-thousand-year-old sitting place." The monk said, "What if there is a head, but no tail?" Kyuho said, "After all, it is not valuable." The monk said, "What if there is a tail, but no head?" Kyuho said, "Being self-complacent, yet having no power." The monk said, "What if the head matches the tail?" Kyuho said, "The descendants will gain power, but one does not know it oneself."

1. the head, with eyes, ears, noses and mouth, acquires sensory perception of the world. Sensory perceptions are data and information used by mind to analyze and catalyze and to form conclusions about the world outside. But perceiving the dawn is attain by being at one with all things, being in the moment with dawn, which is not sensory perceptions and interpretation of those perceptions about dawn.

2. ...a head...After all, it is not valuable. The head (mind) interprets sensory perceptions about the world outside. Be at-one-with-all-thing instead of using the head (mind) to interpret sensory perceptions about the objective world.

3. ...a tail, but no head: meditating without sensory data input

4. head matches the tail: meditating with sensory data input
5. but one does not know it oneself (it is not known in the room, 2004 translation; room = head). Meditation with sensory data input on the nature of the objective world leads to an understanding of the objective world, without reference to spirit.

6. The monk focus on nouns: head and tail; whereas Kyuho focuses on verb: opening, perceiving, sitting, being, gain.

Case 67: The Wisdom in the Kegon Sutra
The Kegon Sutra says, "Now I see all living beings everywhere, and I see that each of them possesses the wisdom and virtue of Tathagata. But because of their delusions and attachments, they cannot realize it."

1. Tathagata = one of the title of the Buddha: the ‘thus-come-one’, referring to the one who has attained perfect enlightenment.

2. Each of them possesses the (potential to attain) wisdom and virtue of Tathagata. Attainment requires effort.

3. Be in the moment without attachments to identity or attachment to desire. Note the difference between ‘desire’ and ‘attachment to desire.’ Eyes do not arise spontaneously. Eyes depend on the desire to see. Without the desire to see, there would be no eyes. Eyes in animals that have no desire to see light, animals living underground or in caves atrophy. The ability to see in the 4th spatial dimension is acquired through desire to see the 4th dimension (to see loved one that have pass beyond the grave). To be in the moment, without desire or motivation to see, the eyes will atrophy. To be in the moment, without desire or motivation to exercise, muscles will atrophy. To be in the moment, without desire or motivation to be healthy, the body will atrophy. Spontaneous processes in nature is entropy, organization moves from order to disorder, water flows down hill, wind moves from region of high pressure to low pressure, and heat flow from hot to cold until temperature reaches a state of equilibrium. Without will, imagination, purpose, thought, and desire, the spontaneous enlightenment is conformity, ‘regression to the mean’ of social norm, to become average in what everybody else does. The Sutra caution against ‘attachments’ not ‘desire’; the desire to see without attachment to what is seen; the desire to be healthy without attachment to healthy nutrients; the desire to understand without attachment to information…

4. See Gateless Gate case 7, Mumon’s comment, Stargate translation: if you immediately know the candlelight is fire, then the meal was cooked a long time ago. …Cows would spontaneously milk themselves, the milk would spontaneously churn itself into butter, the butter would spontaneously spread itself on your toast, ready for you to eat; and meditation would spontaneously pour spiritual wisdom into you, ready for you to grasp without effort, leading to spontaneous enlightenment. Not so! Candle does not spontaneously realize it is fire; rice does not spontaneously cook itself. If you seek enlightenment, you must work. When intuition and spontaneous enlightenment arise, they arise from accumulated work and wisdom of past lives. Work and wisdom in the present life yields intuition and spontaneous enlightenment in the next life.
Case 68: Kassan Brandishes the Sword

A monk asked Kassan, "What if one sweeps away the dust and sees Buddha?" Kassan said, "You must brandish your sword. If you do not brandish your sword, the fisherman dwells in a nest of reeds [1]."

The monk mentioned this to Sekiso and asked him, "What if one sweeps away the dust and sees Buddha?" Sekiso said, "He has no country. Where can one meet him?" The monk reported this to Kassan. Kassan ascended the rostrum and said, "As for the facilities at the gate [2], the old monk [3] is superior to Sekiso, but for deep discourse expounding the true principle he is one hundred steps ahead of me."

[1]: That is, unable to catch a single fish.
[2]: Better teaching methods.
[3]: I.e., "I."

1. **sweeps away the dust and sees Buddha** = labor and sweep: through work, enlightenment may be attained. Dust did not hide the Buddha; Buddha is revealed through labor, work, **sweep, brandish** (verb)
2. **sword** = sword of discernment. Without discernment, the ‘fisherman dwells in a nest of reeds’, clogged by the surrounding environment.
3. **He has no country** = he is anonymous, a citizen of the planet; he has no property or possession in the material world, and is not confined to a location.

Case 70: Shinsan Asks about Nature

Master Shinsan asked Master Shuzan [1], "After you have clearly known the unborn nature of life, why does one adhere to life?" Shuzan said, "The bamboo shoot necessarily becomes a bamboo. But is it possible to make a bamboo rope [2] already out of a bamboo shoot? [3]" Shinsan said, "Later you will realize it yourself." Shuzan said, "My view is just as I said. What is your view?" Shinsan said, "This is the temple steward's quarters, and that is the cooks' quarters." Shuzan made a deep bow.

[1]: The two masters were Dharma brothers.
[2]: A rope made out of thin bamboo tops.
[3]: That is, I am still "a bamboo shoot"; you cannot make "a bamboo rope" out of me.

1. **after you have clearly known the unborn nature of life** (knowledge, information, data, facts, rules, commandments = noun) **why does one adhere to life?** The answer: to evolve, fulfillment of purpose = verb. Enlightenment is not spontaneous; you must labor to attain enlightenment.
2. **bamboo shoot necessarily becomes a bamboo** (= A bamboo shoot will be a bamboo ladle in the future. But can we use it as a bamboo ladle now? True Dharma Eye case 120, T Cleary translation). Life evolves and is tested by
gravity, light, chemical reaction, corrosion, erosion, disease and pestilence; wisdom is tested by karma, reciprocity and harmony with nature. Wisdom derives from experience and evolution; wisdom is not spontaneous.

3. **This is the temple steward's quarters, and that is the cooks' quarters:** order, progression and evolution

**Case 74: Hogen's "Form and Name"**

A monk asked Hogen, "I hear that a sutra says, 'From the basis of non-abiding all dharmas are established.' What is this basis of non-abiding?" Hogen said, "Form arises from what has no substance yet; name comes from what has no name yet."

1. **What is this basis of non-abiding?** The basis of non-abiding is formless, unnamable spirit that dwell in manifestation to acquire wisdom. Spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes perception of manifestation; perception precedes thoughts about perception; thought and analysis of perceptions precede wisdom. Dharma is wisdom, the collection thoughts tested by manifestation, karma, reciprocity and harmony with nature, and found to be just, true and beautiful.

2. **Form arises from what has no substance yet:** Form arises from formless energy. Form arises from vibration that set the inert matter into regions of high and low density.
   a. **In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.** (New Testament of the Bible, John 1:1-2, King James Version).
      i. In the beginning (of time) was the Word (sound, vibration, and motion) and the Word was with (-in) God and the Word was (the intent or purpose of) God. ( Everywhere in space,) the same was in the beginning (of time) with God'
      ii. The beginning of time begins with motion. The Word (sound, vibration) sets matter into regions of high density and low density. This motion gives rise to form; form in motion gives rise to time. Time is measured by motion of atoms in atomic clock; the 24 hour spin of earth about its axis; the orbital motion of earth around the sun; the 26,000 year precession of the sun etc.
      iii. If there is no motion, then there is no time; if consciousness fails to detect motion, then consciousness fails to detect time.
      iv. Before the beginning of time, there was space in the state of entropy: 'the degradation of the matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity'. Everywhere in space was the same, without discernable motion of formless things.

3. **name comes from what has no name yet:** name of a river comes from river but river is not name. Spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes perception of manifestation; perceptions precede thought of perception; thought precedes the naming of things. Spirit proceeds name and naming.
Case 75: Zuigan's "Everlasting Principle"

2004 translation: Zuigan [1] asked Ganto, "What is the intrinsic, everlasting principle?" Ganto said, "It has moved." Zuigan said, "What if it moves?" Ganto said, "You can't see the intrinsic, everlasting principle." Zuigan thought for a moment. Ganto said, "If you acknowledge it, you are not yet free from the roots and their dust [2]. If you do not acknowledge it, you are immersed in endless birth and death."

2014 translation: Zuigan asked Ganto, “What is the everlasting truth?” Ganto said, “It has moved.” Zuigan said, “What if it moves?” Ganto said, “You don't see the everlasting truth.” Zuigan thought for a moment. Ganto said, “If you acknowledge it, you are not yet free from the roots and their dust. If you do not acknowledge it, you are immersed in endless birth and death.”

Book of Serenity, T Cleary translation: Ruiyan asked Yantou, "What is the fundamental constant principle?" Yantou said, "Moving." Ruiyan said, "When moving, what then?" Yantou said, "You don't see the fundamental constant principle." Ruiyan stood there thinking. Yantou said, "If you agree, you are not yet free of sense and matter: if you don't agree, you'll be forever sunk in birth and death."

True Dharma Eye, case 180, T Cleary translation:
Ruiyan Shiyan asked his teacher Yantou, “What is the original permanence?” Yantou said, “Movement.”
Ruiyan said, “What happens when movement takes place?” Yantou said, “You don't see the original permanence.”
Ruiyan silently reflected on the matter.
Yantou said, “If you agree with this, you are bound by subject and object. If you disagree with this, you fall into an endless cycle of birth and death.”

[1]: At the time of this dialogue Zuigan was still a young boy.
[2]: The "roots" means "six roots" of sense organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, consciousness. "Dust", more exactly "six dust particles," means the objects of the six sense organs: form, sound, smell, taste, things to be touched, objects of mind.

1. Everlasting principle, fundamental constant and original permanence are purpose: purpose of move, moving, movement, and motion.
2. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God (New Testament of the Bible, John 1:1-2, King James Version).
a. In the beginning (of time) was the Word (sound or vibration,) and the Word was with (-in) God and the Word was (the intent or purpose of) God.
(Elsewhere in space,) the same was in the beginning (of time) with (-in) God.
b. Before the Word set things into motion, space and matter was in the state of entropy ‘the degradation of the matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity’; everywhere in space was the same. Vibration from the Word created regions of high density and low density matter and matter in motion. Things in motion give rise to the beginning of time. Motion originates from the Word; the Word came from the will, intent and purpose of God. The will, intent and purpose is the everlasting truth, the fundamental constant principle, or the original permanence.

3. If you acknowledge it: you = subject; it = object. This is separation into duality between 'you' and 'it' (the everlasting principle). If you acknowledge this separation, then you are not free from duality; you are not at-one-with-all-things.

4. If you do not acknowledge it (duality), you are immersed in endless birth and death. Birth and death is endless when omitting purpose, the everlasting principle, the everlasting truth, the fundamental constant principle, the original permanence.

5. Spirit dwells in time and beyond the edge of time. The region of time and motion is the region of birth and death. Beyond the edge of time is no thing; spirit; unmanifest all potential of spirit; space without reference to things. If you do not realize space beyond the edge of time, then you are caught in the dimension of time; immersed in endless birth and death.

Case 87: Sozan: With or Without

Sozan came to Isan and asked, "I have heard that you said, 'Words of being and words of non-being are just like wisteria wound around a tree.' If suddenly the tree falls down and the wisteria withers, where will the words go?" Isan burst into great laughter. Sozan said, "I sold my clothes and other belongings, and made an arduous journey of one thousand miles to come to you. Why does Your Reverence make light of me?" Isan called his attendant and said, "Bring some money and give it to this reverend monk for his travel expenses." Finally he said, "Some day a one-eyed dragon will let you open your eyes."

Later Sozan went to Myosho and told him about this. Myosho said, "I can say that Isan is completely right, but he did not meet one who could appreciate him." Sozan asked again, "If the tree falls down and the wisteria withers, where will the words go?" Myosho said, "It would make Isan laugh again all the more." Upon hearing this, Sozan gained realization. Then he said, "From the beginning, there was a sword behind Isan's laughter."

1. Words are like wisteria vines coiled around a tree: as description, words do not have the strength to stand up on their own, they need the support of thing and circumstance which they describe. Poetry is not river; poetry about river needs river to give it support.
2. When ...the wisteria dies: when words die, when there is no need to describe things, then our speech become verb, laughter, or speech infused with power and vibration that shake things by voice.
3. From the beginning, there was a sword behind Isan's laughter: laughter was the sword of discernment, to discern the difference between poetry and river;
between words that describe and words that stand on its own power to vibrate things; between 'description of laughter' and 'laughter'.

Case 97: Emperor Doko’s Helmet Hood
Emperor Doko spoke to Koke saying, "I have attained the treasure of the Central Plain [1]. However, no one can set a price on it." Koke said, "Your Majesty, please lend it to me so that I may see." The emperor pulled the straps of his helmet hood with both hands. Koke said, "Who can dare to set a price on the emperor's treasure!"

[1]: The entire land of China.

The emperor pulled the straps of his helmet hood = the price of the emperor's treasure is his will, mind, head, guidance and determination in carrying out the mandate from heaven.

Case 98: Tozan’s "Intimate with It"
A monk asked Tozan, "Among the three bodies [of Buddha] [1], what body does not degenerate into numbers?" Tozan said, "I am always most intimate with it."

[1]: They are: (1) hosshin, Dharmakaya or Dharma-body, (2) hojin, Sambhogakaya or the body of reward, and (3) ojin or keshin, Nirmanakaya or the accommodated body.

1. Among the three buddha bodies what body does not degenerate into numbers? This is backwards, Zen is to realize the unity of all things; not separating spirit into distinct parts, into the three bodies, and then ask which one...
2. degenerate into numbers = identity, objects, things, specialization, separation, categorization, differentiation into part of this and part of that, the quantity of things, nouns (person, place things, ideas).
3. I am...with it = being at one with all the different parts.
4. if you need a head, chop my head off and take it with you (additional line in The True Dharma Eye case 55 translation): the whole is greater than the sum of its parts; chopping off parts of a body destroys the unity of life. Chopping the 3 buddha bodies into different parts is backwards.

Case 100: Roya’s "Mountains and Rivers"
A monk asked Master Kaku of Roya, "The essential state is pure and clear. How are mountains, rivers and the great earth produced at once?" Kaku said, "The essential state is pure and clear. How are mountains, rivers and the great earth produced at once?"
1. **The essential state, pure and clear**: prior to manifestation of mountains, rivers and the great earth there is spirit in the essential state, pure and clear. From the essential state comes will, imagination and the question ‘what if’. "What if produced nature all at once.

2. The monk's statement is a question; Kaku's statement is an answer. The answer to ‘how are mountains, river and the great earth produced at once?’ is discovered by first, asking the question and then, pondering, being at one with the question and being at one with all things. The answer is spirit, will, imagination, potential and 'what if'.

3. From the perspective of the ‘path of being’, **mountains, rivers and the great earth produced at once** by being at one with all things, being at one with the imagination of spirit: ‘what if’ and being in the great unfolding of the universe.

4. From the perspective of the ‘path of salvation’, creations of God are a wonder and a mystery that strengthens faith in God.

5. From the perspective of the ‘path of divinity’, time is split into past, present and future. Cause and effect: the cause is will, imagination, and the question ‘what if’. The effect is the unfolding of mountains, rivers and the great earth over billions of years in geologic time and expansion of the universe, from past to present and future time.

6. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehend it not.** (New Testament of the Bible, John 1:1-5, King James Version).
   a. **In the beginning** = beginning of time
   b. **the Word** = energy, motion, and vibration that created regions of space with more dense and less dense substances.
   c. **the Word was** (the will, imagination and intent of) **God**. From the imagination of God came ‘what if’ that created the potential for **mountains, rivers and the great earth at once**.
   d. **The same** = space without reference to things or motion; uniformity; a state of entropy. The state of entropy existed before there was discernable motion, before there was time, before there was a beginning. A region of space with no motion has no time; time is measured by motion. When time ends, everything returns to a state of entropy; until the next Word that set matter into motion and differentiation. If there is a beginning then there is an end, and a future new beginning and a future end. However, space is unaffected by things, motion, the beginning of time and the end of time.
   e. **All things were made by him** = the architect imagines ‘what if’, the divine plan for the current manifestation. Subsequently the details of the plan are filled out by builders of the universe, lesser gods, and co-creators working from past, to present, to future. Time began with differentiation of **things**, and **things** in motion.
f. **In him was life; and the life was the light of (within) men** = the spark of life and the potential to imagine was granted to the minds of lesser gods, co-creators and humanity.

g. **And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehend it not** = the present and future work of lesser gods, co-creators and humanity is to expand light into darkness. The freedom to imagine, build and co-create is ongoing, not yet finished.

7. Time is the perception of relative motion. If there is no motion, there is no time. Failure to detect motion arises because 1) there is no motion 2) motion is too fast or too slow for our detection 3) motion is same in all direction and there is no way to differentiate the sameness of motion and sameness in direction of motion, 4) detector malfunction, 5) detector error, or 6) improper detector used in the search for motion, e.g. we fail to detect ether in the 4th spatial dimension when using sensors from the 3 spatial dimensions. This is a detector problem, not absence of etheric substance, etheric motion or etheric time. This is similar to the koan: 'what is the sound of one hand clapping?' Waving one hand at a rate of 1 cycle per second generates subsonic sound of 1 hertz; below the normal human hearing range of 20-20,000 hertz. Using human ears and unable to hear subsonic sound is a detector problem, not an absence of subsonic sound. The sound of one hand clapping is the sound of the earth, the subsonic sound of earthquake, volcano, tidal wave, wind, subsonic sounds from whales, giraffes, pigeons, alligators, tigers, elephants etc. Also, the koan of Ryutan handing Tokusan a candle because it is dark outside, then Ryutan blows out the candle (Gateless Gate, case 28). The human eyes see in the visible range of the electromagnetic spectrum from red to violet (760 to 380 nm). Below the normal range of human vision is infrared and microwave; above the normal range of human vision is ultraviolet and cosmic ray. The earth is constantly bathed in cosmic background microwave radiation as well as cosmic ray that human eyes do not see. For Tokusan, it is dark outside because of a detector problem, not an absence of cosmic background microwave or cosmic ray.

8. Time:

a. Students who follow the path of being try to be in the moment, be here now, be at one with all things, super consciousness, non intervention. Time is not separated into past, present and future.

b. Students who follow the path of salvation have no need to count time. Faith in their god, savior, master, guru, or teacher is not depended on counting time.

c. Students who follow the path of divinity split time into past, present, and future. The scientific method measures and collect data to make observations of past events; compare those observations to present events; formulate theories to predict the future, and test those theories against past observations and repeatability of observations in the present and future. The judicial system splits time into past, present and future; adjudicate and dispense justice for past actions and to deter future crimes. The challenge in reductionist scientific method is in selectively analyze and catalyze: selective observations using limited detectors to reduce problems to their common denominator; to shut off all other detectors; chop the whole of life into
different pieces and assume life is not greater than the sum of its
dismembered parts; to minimize all variables and inputs until problems can be
solved using minimum information; then catalyzing, reassembling or inspire to
something new. Analyze, catalyze and intervention are anathema to being at
one with all things and non intervention.

d. **Mountains, rivers and the great earth** (are) **produced at once** with the
beginning of time, with differentiation of things and things in motion.

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