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## Koans, part 4, selections from The True Dharma Eye

comments by student t

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The following koans are selected from the cases 1-100 of [The True Dharma Eye](#), a collection of 300 koans with commentaries by Zen Master Dogen (1200-1253), translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and John Daido Looi, 2011\*. Commentaries and verses are omitted here; see original for complete collection of 300 koans, commentaries and verses. **Bold** italics type are direct quotes from various sources.

'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: Qingyuan's Whisk

**Zen master Qingyuan Xingsi [Hongji] of Jingju Monastery once asked Zen master Xiqian of Shitou [Wuji], "Where are you from?"**

**Shitou said, "I am from Caoxi [where the Sixth Ancestor taught]."**

**Master Qingyuan held up a whisk and said, "Do they have this in Caoxi?"**

**Shitou said, "Not in Caoxi, nor in India."**

**The master said, "You haven't been to India, have you?"**

**Shitou said, "If I had been there, it would have been there."**

**The master said, "If you haven't been there, how can you say that?"**

**Shitou said, "Master, you should say something rather than letting me say it all."**

**The master said, "It's not that I mind saying something, but I fear it would be misunderstood later."**

1. **Zen master Xiqian of Shitou...Shitou said...** Zen masters are at one with their environment and take the name of the location where they taught. Xiqian taught at Shitou and takes the name Shitou.
2. **Where are you from?** From a physical location or state of mind? Shitou replied 'from **Caoxi**' a physical location **where the Sixth Ancestor taught**.
3. **Held up a whisk and said. "Do they have this...? whisk** = a physical object (noun), or usage of the physical object to awaken students (verb).
4. **Not in Caoxi, nor in India:** = 2 different physical locations; or 2 level of consciousness, the teachings from Caoxi and the teachings from India.
5. **You should say something.** This assumes a suitable language capable of conveying ideas from speaker to listener; the speaker has sufficient command of language to describe thoughts using words; thoughts correctly analyzed and interpreted sensory data about the external world acquired through the senses; sensory perception was accurate without distortion, signal limitation or omission; and the perceptions of the world, although localized in time and space, were sufficient to represent the world (Caoxi, China, earth, our solar system, a tiny sector of the Milky Way galaxy, and/or the entire universe, past, present and future). Please use words to represent thoughts, ideas and to **say something**. Shitou requests information, data, fact, knowledge, words, and descriptions; he is not yet a Zen master.
6. **It's not that I mind saying something...** misunderstanding arises from using words to describe interpretations of observation made using sensors to perceive nature by indirect

means. Language and words are society agreed upon usages. If the sensor is defective, the defect permeates into the observation, interpretation and description of observation using words to '**say something**'. Nature IS. Nature is not limited by human perception of sight, sound, smell, taste or touch; or time and location of observations; or confined to earth; or human interpretations of sensory data; or human language used to describe the observations to **say something**.

7. ***I fear it would be misunderstood later.*** Whatever is said now will be interpreted at a later time.
  - a. Future interpretations will be made by someone using language from a different era, and perhaps a translation from one language to another language. The meaning of words will have evolved.
  - b. Whatever is said will leave something else that is unsaid. That sets up dualities of this and not that; is and is not, mental gymnastics and arguments. The focus on intellectual arguments leads away from nature. Being at one with nature is and should remain the primary focus rather than intellectual arguments.
  - c. Anything that is said will invite analysts to tear apart what is said; instead of trying to understand and to build. If it is to test the verity of the proposition, nature does that already through the test of manifestation, is it real or an illusion; through the test of time, is it durable; through the test of karma (reciprocity, do unto others as you would have others do unto you); test of harmony with nature, is it compatible or in discord with other life on earth; and the test of resource and energy conservation.
  - d. Anything that is said will invite dualist and the spirit of negation to take the opposite view and oppose whatever, whenever, whoever and however.
  - e. Anything that is said will invite the spirit of destruction to destroy what is said.

### ***CASE 2: Baizhang Remains Seated***

***Zen master Xiyun of Mount Huangbo [Duanji] asked his teacher, Baizhang Huaihai, "How can we explain the teaching that has been handed down?"***

***Baizhang remained seated in silence.***

***Huangbo said, "If so, what will people in the future receive?"***

***Baizhang said, "They will say that you are a true person." He then returned to the abbot's room.***

1. ***Baizhang remained seated in silence*** = silence, this moment, to be, be here now

### ***CASE 3: Nanquan's "Water Buffalo"***

***Zen master Congshen of Zhaozhou [Zhenji] asked his teacher, Nanquan, "Where will the one who knows go?"***

***Nanquan said, "To a donor's house near the mountain, and become a water buffalo."***

***Zhaozhou thanked him for his teaching.***

***Nanquan said, "Late last night the moonlight came through the window."***

1. ***The one who knows*** will go and participate with evolution in nature and to serve at a ***donor's house***.
2. ***A donor's house near the mountain***: away from cities, anonymous, without special distinction, title or recognition, not known as elite, hero or chosen.

3. **Water buffalo** = represents water and earth, 2 of the 5 elements: wood, fire, earth, metal and water. Wood and fiber are crops grown with tillage and irrigation; metal is to work and serve at a **donor's house**; fire is the essence of the work. Thus all 5 elements, wood, fire, earth, metal and water are brought together by '**one who knows**' through service at a **donor's house**.
4. **Moonlight came through the window**: **moonlight** = in the natural world; **window** = an artifact, human construct used to regulate the flow of natural forces into the mind. Someone was enlightened by nature.

#### **CASE 4: Mazu's "Heart Sutra"**

**Once, Lecturer Liang of Mount Xi studied with Mazu, who said, "Which sutra do you teach?"**

**Liang said, "The Heart/Mind Sutra."**

**Mazu said, "How do you teach it?"**

**Liang said, "I teach it with the mind."**

**Mazu said, "The mind is like an actor. The will is like a supporting actor. The objects of the six senses are like their company. How can they teach this sutra?"**

**Liang said, "If the mind can't teach it, can emptiness teach it?"**

**Mazu said, "Yes, emptiness can teach it."**

**Liang flipped his sleeves and walked away.**

**Mazu called out, "Lecturer!"**

**Liang turned his head.**

**Mazu said, "From birth till death, it's just this." At that moment Liang had realization. He hid himself at Mount Xi [J., Sei] and was not heard from again.**

1. **I teach it with the mind.** Inside is not outside. The mind is inside Lecturer Liang; nature is outside of Liang. Liang uses his mind to analyze and interpret sensory data compiled in his brain.
2. Liang advocates 'reality is in the mind', the mind acquires information about the external world through **the six senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste, and thought or cognition)**, and makes interpretations about the sensory data assembled in the brain. We have no direct observation of the external world; all we have are sensory data, and thoughts about the sensory data derived from 6 senses responding to external stimuli. Any distortion, omission or error in sensory data result in distortion, omission and error in thought.
  - a. Omissions in observation of nature due to location from earth, residing in a rarified region of the Milky Way galaxy, one among billions of galaxies, a tiny region of nature. Omissions in observation of nature due to time; nature existed long before humans lived on the planet; before there was human mind.
  - b. Humans have imperfect sensors, poor resolution and inadequate detection range. For example, most humans have trichromatic retina, able to see 3 colors, red, green and blue, and combination of those 3 colors (see <trichromacy> Wikipedia). Color seen by most humans is an interpretation of the 3 colors; it is not the full spectrum of visible light in nature. Some have dichromatic retina, seeing only 2 colors; some have tetrachromatic retina, seeing 4 colors or approximately 90 million more combinations of color than normal trichromatic human eyes see. Our vision is restricted to the visible spectrum of the electromagnetic wave, we do not see infrared (visible to fish, snake, frog and mosquito), or cosmic background

microwave (originating from the beginning of this universe 14 billion years ago) or ultraviolet light (visible to bees, birds, cats, dogs, moth and spiders). Human audio range is 20 to 20,000 hertz; above 20,000 hertz is ultrasound that bat, dogs, and crickets can hear; below 20 hertz is infrasound that crocodile, elephant, dolphin can hear. Some humans are clairvoyant and clairaudient, able to see and hear in the 4<sup>th</sup> spatial dimension. Quality and completeness of sensory data is limited to the observers' sensor and the observers' competency in observations.

- c. Interpretations of sensory data depend on the observer's proficiency in data analysis.
  - d. For a typical human observer, sensory data pertaining to higher dimensions, clairvoyance and clairaudience are disregarded; ultrasound and infrasound are disregarded; cosmic microwave, infrared and ultraviolet signals are disregarded; interstellar signals and data beyond our solar system are disregarded; and complex logic, science and mathematics are disregard in their formulation of thoughts about nature derived from sensory data.
  - e. The mind offers an incomplete, indirect and imperfect understanding of nature. So, what do you **teach with the mind**?
3. **Mazu said... how can they teach this sutra?** **Liang said, "If the mind can't teach it...** Liang gave up too soon. He could have said IF thoughts are applied to the natural world to build, create, imagine, and serve then the mind teaches indirectly through action and by example. When the stuff inside the **mind** is brought outside the mind in creating things, the intent of the **heart** is revealed. IF thoughts remain in the mind without application to nature, then **the mind can't teach it**. Inside is not outside. Liang needs to make a minor adjustment; reality is not in the mind, reality is nature; the mind can participate with nature by applying thoughts to nature; the mind can teach it when good thoughts are guided by good intentions from the heart. Downloading wisdom from the mind of god does not add more wisdom to the mind of god; wisdom without action is futile; action without wisdom is dangerous. Mind can teach it IF mind participate with nature in action guided by wisdom.
  4. **Emptiness** = a state prior to manifestation of things; the absence of things, no thing; to be, in the moment, without judgment or separation of things.
  5. **Lecturer! Liang turned his head** = he self identify as one who lectures; a purveyor of information, data, facts, sutras, scripture, law, commandments, knowledge, and opinions (= nouns). Liang focuses on mind, ideas, thoughts and interpretations about the world. Inside is not outside; mental constructs in the mind are not outside in nature. Poetry is not river. Poetry is description, words about nature (nouns); river supports aquatic life, provides water for cities and agriculture, transport water, nutrient, sediment and cargo, generate hydropower, provide space for recreation. Nature is activity (verb). Noun is person, place, thing or idea; noun is not verb.
  6. **From birth till death, it's just this** (moment) to be, be, here, now, today
  7. There are 3 different spiritual paths. Mazu follows the path of being and seeks unity with all things, to be in the moment. There is no separation of time into past, present and future; there is no separation between observer and observation; no separation between self and nature. However, for those who follow the path of divinity, there is sensory perception, analysis of sensory perception, testing of analytical thoughts, time separated into past, present and future, evolution, manifestation, karma and harmony. The path of divinity is to be assistants to divine hierarchy in building a better planet and making gradual improvement over time. Those who follow the path of salvation seek salvation

from life on earth through teachings, sutras, Holy Scripture, savior or being at sacred places; the seeker is separated from, but seeks union with, the source of salvation.

8. The proposition that reality is in the mind is not a spiritual path. God, soul, spirit, purpose of life, and nature are all products of sensory interpretations in the mind; when the person dies, the mind dies along with everything else including god, soul and spirit that are in the mind. Inside is not outside; 'reality is in the mind' does not offer a path to 'reality is outside in nature'.

#### **CASE 5: Layman Pangyun's Awakening**

**Layman Pangyun asked Shitou upon his first meeting with the teacher, "Who is the one who does not accompany all things?"**

**Shitou covered Pangyun's mouth with his hand.**

**Pangyun had some understanding at this point.**

**Later he repeated the same question to Mazu.**

**Mazu said, "Wait till you swallow up the Xi River in a single gulp, then I will tell you."**

**Pangyun was immediately awakened.**

1. **Who is the one who does not accompany all things?** 'Accompany' is verb, relating subject (**one**) to object (**all things**); an implied separation between subject and object. Being at one with all; there is no separation between 'self' and all things outside of 'self'; there is no thing to accompany.
2. **Shitou covered Pangyun's mouth:** do not speak words, names or description; poetry is not river. Shitou's response here is different from an earlier Shitou requesting 'say something' in **Case 1**.
3. **Wait till you swallow up the Xi River in a single gulp** = when you become at one with the river.

#### **CASE 8: Nanyue Polishes a Brick**

**Zen master Mazu Daoyi was an attendant to Nanyue and personally received the mind seal from him, exceeding his peers. Before that, he lived in Kaiyuan Monastery and did zazen all day long. Knowing that Mazu was a dharma vessel, Nanyue went to him and asked, "Great monastic, what do you intend by doing zazen?"**

**Mazu said, "I am intending to be a buddha."**

**Nanyue picked up a brick and started polishing it.**

**Mazu said, "What are you doing?"**

**Nanyue said, "I am trying to make a mirror."**

**Mazu said, "How can you make a mirror by polishing a brick?"**

**Nanyue said, "How can you become a buddha by doing zazen?"**

**Mazu said, "What do you mean by that?"**

**Nanyue said, "Think about driving a cart. When it stops moving, do you whip the cart or the horse?"**

**Mazu said nothing.**

**Nanyue said, "Do you want to practice sitting Zen or sitting Buddha? If you understand sitting Zen, you will know that Zen is not about sitting or lying down. If you want to learn sitting Buddha, know that sitting Buddha is without any fixed form. Do not use discrimination in the non-abiding dharma. If you practice sitting as Buddha, you must kill**

**Buddha. If you are attached to the sitting form, you are not yet mastering the essential principle.”**

**Mazu heard this admonition and felt as if he had tasted sweet nectar.**

1. **How can you become a buddha by doing zazen?** Buddha is buddha; zazen is zazen. Poetry is not river. Zazen is like poetry, description about river. Buddha is, river is, river transports water, sediment, and cargo, support aquatic life, provide space for recreation.
2. Three paths: the path of salvation, the path of being, and the path of divinity.
  - a. Salvation requires obedience to the commandments, rules, sutras, laws, Holy Scriptures. The self is separated from, but seeks union with, the source of salvation. The first step is to discover the holy truths; students may achieve enlightenment through devotion to a deity, master, guru, teacher, or savior.
  - b. The ‘path of being’ is to be, be here now, to be at one with all of nature without separation, discrimination, individualization or self-identity. This is not a pursuit of salvation or a desire to leave the wheel of rebirth; but to be at one with nature.
  - c. The ‘path of divinity’ is to become co-creators of the universe, to be assistants to lesser gods in building the universe, making widgets, moving molecules around, shuffling objects, analyzing numbers, counting the number of fishes in a river. The act of building things leads to better character through consciousness, observation, thoroughness, persistence, patience. Things created in the world are tested by time and manifestation and found to be real instead of imaginary; tested by karma (reciprocity, do unto others as you want others do unto you) and found to be just; tested by harmony with nature and found to be beautiful; tested by conservation of energy and resources. Nature is an external agent that test the understanding gained inside the head. Labor, work, do, build, make, create, imagine, and serve: **Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father** (John 14:12, King James Version of the Bible).
3. Nanyue described 2 of the 3 paths. **If you are attached to the sitting form you are not yet mastering the essential principle** of the path of being; although you may succeed in the path of salvation through devotion and sitting. Nanyue did not describe the path of divinity.

### **CASE 9: Minister Peixiu Sees a Portrait**

**Huangbo once left his assembly at Mount Huangbo and entered Daan Temple. There he joined the workers who cleaned the halls. Once, Minister Peixiu visited the temple to offer incense and was greeted by the temple director. Peixiu looked at a mural on the wall and said, “What kind of painting is that?”**

**The director said, “It is a portrait of a high monastic.”**

**Peixiu said, “Obviously it is a portrait. But where is the high monastic?”**

**The director could not answer.**

**Peixiu said, “Is there a Zen person around here?”**

**The director said, “A monastic has been working in this temple. He seems to be a Zen person.”**

**Peixiu said, “Could you ask him to come so I can ask him questions?” Huangbo was quickly brought to the minister, who was happy to see him. The minister said, “I have a question, but all the masters I have asked this question of have been unable to answer it. Reverend, would you please respond to it?”**

**Huangbo said, "Please present your question, my lord."**

**Peixiu repeated the question he had asked the temple director.**

**Huangbo raised his voice, called out and said, "Minister!"**

**Peixiu responded, "Yes?"**

**Huangbo said, "Where are you?"**

**Peixiu immediately understood. It was just like finding a pearl in his own hair. He said to Huangbo, "You are a true master." Then he asked Huangbo to open the teaching hall and let him enter.**

1. **Huangbo... entered Daan Temple. There he joined the workers who cleaned the halls.** The enlightened person is anonymous, and in appearance, will be seen as same as an unenlightened person; without special designation, title, or recognition; is not known as elite, hero, or chosen. **Before enlightenment, chop wood carry water, after enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.**
2. **What kind of painting is that?** = portrait as representation of someone out there in nature; an idea in the artist's mind; or the presence of someone. Portrait as representation arise from the artist's ability to perceive outside world; the artist's interpretation of sensory perception using sight with limited range of detection from red to violet while omitting infrared, microwave, ultraviolet or gamma ray; the painting as 2 dimensional compression of the 3 dimensional world; and the artist's talent in using a restricted set of colorant while unable to imbed sound, taste, odor, touch on to the 2 dimensional canvas. The presence of someone in a painting is realized by being at one with the painting, being at one with all things, being in the moment, now, here.
3. **Minister! Peixiu responded, 'Yes'** = 'Minister' the representation of someone, or the presences of someone? Peixiu self identify with **minister** a name of someone instead of presence of someone. What is in a name (of minster, monastic, master, teacher, or savior)? Is name a word that represents someone outside; an idea inside the speaker's mind; or the presences of someone without the intermediary of representation? To be at one with a person's name is to perceive the presence of someone. The power of speech capable of projecting the presences of someone in name depends on state of consciousness of the speaker; consciousness that is, now, in the moment, here.
4. **Where are you** = physical location or state of mind?

#### **CASE 10: Qingyuan's "Come Closer"**

**Once a monastic asked Qingyuan, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from India?"**

**Qingyuan said, "It's just like this!"**

**The monastic asked further, "What do you have to teach these days?"**

**Qingyuan said, "Come closer."**

**The monastic moved closer.**

**Qingyuan said, "Keep this in mind."**

1. **It's just like this** (moment)!
2. **Come closer** = closer in physical location or closer to a state of mind.
3. **Keep this** (moment) **in mind**.

**CASE 11: Zhaozhou's "Losing the Mind in Confusion"**

**Zhaozhou said to the assembly, "If you have even a bit of discrimination, you lose your mind in confusion.' Do you have anything to say about this?"**

**A monastic hit Zhaozhou's attendant and said, "Why don't you answer the master?"**

**Zhaozhou left and went back to the abbot's room. Later the attendant asked Zhaozhou for guidance and said, "Did that monastic who struck me have understanding, or did he not?"**

**Zhaozhou said, "The one who sits sees the one who stands; the one who stands sees the one who sits."**

1. **If you have even a bit of discrimination, you lose your mind in confusion.** Humans have imperfect sensors, poor resolution and inadequate detection range providing incomplete or distorted sensory data. The mind compile incomplete and distorted sensory data, make interpretations about those data to arrive at **discrimination**, categorization, judgment, separation and description. If you are not careful, **you lose your mind in confusion** arising from incomplete and distorted sensory data. Inside is not outside; stuff inside the mind is not stuff outside in nature. What does **discrimination** (arising from inside the mind) have to do with being at one with nature (outside the mind)?
2. However, from the perspective of the 'path of divinity', analysis, logic, judgment, categorization, and **discrimination** are essential steps in building things; first analyze then catalyze and create new things. Followers of the path of divinity seek to become assistants to lesser gods in building a better world. The act of making widgets, shuffling molecules and building stuff develops individual character through observation, thoroughness, persistence, dedication, patience, imagination, sympathy, compassion and awakening that arise from tests and failures. Failures and imperfections arise from gravity, corrosion, erosion, resistance, competition, disease, pestilence, discord and fragility.
3. **The one who sits sees the one who stands...** assumes separation, differentiation, distance, and **discrimination** between the one who sits and the who stands; and discrimination between **have understanding, or did he not**. If the attendant were in the state of 'being', then the question would not have arisen.
4. Capping verse: **When thought** (analysis, discrimination, and separation) **disappear, the thinker disappear. When the mind is at peace the whole universe is at peace.** The 'path of being' is to be at one with all things, without thought or analysis of perceptions; nature and observer are one; accept things as they are without judgment, without separation. However, the 'path of divinity' sees nature out there, separate from perceiver; acquires knowledge about nature outside; and applies wisdom to make widgets and shape the external world of manifestation. The 'path of salvation' sees an imperfect world separate from the perceiver; and pursues salvation from the imperfect world (of suffering).

**CASE 12: Dongshan's "Going Beyond Buddha"**

**Zen master Dongshan Liangjie [Wuben] of Mount Dong said to the assembly, "Experience going beyond Buddha and say a word."**

**A monastic asked him, "What is saying a word?"**

**Dongshan said, "When you say a word, you don't hear it."**

**The monastic said, "Do you hear it?"**



***Dongshan said, “When I am not speaking, I hear it.”***

1. ***Saying a word:*** word as representation, name of person, place, thing, idea, name of activity, information, data, fact, interpretation (of going beyond Buddha)... ; or word as the experience, going beyond Buddha (aaaauuuummmmm).
2. ***When you say a word, you don’t hear it.*** The act of compiling word and description to speak sentences interferes with being at one with the experience of ***going beyond Buddha***
3. ***Do you hear it?*** The monk referred ‘*it*’ to word, name of a sound, idea or representation.
4. ***When I am not speaking, I hear it;*** Dongshan refers ‘*it*’ to ***experience going beyond Buddha***; when I am not compiling words to speak, I hear the experience of going beyond Buddha. Nature does not require discrimination, interpretation, representation, thought, word or speech (stuff inside the mind); nature is.

#### ***CASE 14: Yangshan’s “Dharma Positions”***

***Yangshan once asked his teacher, Zen master Guishan Lingyou [Dayuan] of Mount Gui, “How is it when millions of objects emerge all at once?”***

***Guishan said, “Blue is not yellow. Long is not short. All things abide in their own positions. It does not concern me.”***

***Yangshan bowed.***

1. ***When millions of objects emerge all at once*** = the beginning of manifestation of things, differentiation, and the beginning of the universe with a big bang. While in manifestation, ***‘Blue is not yellow, long is not short.’*** Prior to manifestation, or from the perspective of spirit, there is no differentiation between blue, yellow, long or short.
2. ***It does not concern me*** = Be here now; be in the moment in spirit rather than dwell on the differentiation of things, the difference between blue and yellow, between long and short.
3. Differentiation, separation, categorization, thought and analysis of sensory perception are stuff in the mind. There are 3 different perspectives here: reality is stuff in the mind; reality is stuff outside in nature; and reality is in spirit, in the unity with all things, without separation. Being at one with all things, without separation is the path of being
4. Whereas the ‘path of divinity’ sees separation; reality as stuff outside in nature, and use the mind to work with the stuff outside in nature, to be assistant to lesser gods in building better widgets and better ecosystems; co-creator of the universe through divine guidance. Work, building things, thought, logic, and analysis are tested in the world of manifestation for accuracy, harmony, justice and beauty; tested by gravity, entropy, friction, resistance, recoil, time with beginnings and ends, competition, discord, corrosion, disease, pestilence and death.

#### ***CASE 15: Xuansha’s “One Bright Pearl”***

***Zen master Shibe of Xuansha [Zongyi] was once asked by a monastic, “You said that the entire world of the ten directions is one bright pearl. How can I understand the meaning of this?”***

***Xuansha said, “The entire world of the ten directions is one bright pearl. Why is it necessary to understand the meaning of this?”***

***On the following day Xuansha said to the monastic, “The entire world of the ten directions is one bright pearl. How do you understand the meaning of this?”***

***The monastic replied, “The entire world of the ten directions is one bright pearl. Why is it necessary to understand the meaning of this?”***

***Xuansha said, “Now I know that you are living inside the cave of demons on the black mountain.”***

1. ***How can I understand the meaning of this*** = the monk request information, data, fact, knowledge, news, opinion, interpretation, description, summary, wisdom, conjecture ... nouns, stuff from the mind.
2. ***Ten directions: east, south, west, north, and their midpoints, plus up and down***
3. ***The entire world of the ten directions is one bright pearl'*** = spirit is prior to the manifestation of the ten directions and the manifestation of all things. Spirit is the pearl in all things, seek the state of 'being at one with all things' and you will find the one bright pearl that unify all things scattered in the ten directions.
4. ***The cave of demons*** is the mind (***cave***) filled with thoughts (***demons***) that traps the student into analysis, judgment, discrimination, choosing and separation from nature; a diversion for those who follow the path of being. However, for those who follow the path of divinity, thought and analysis are applied to the external world, to work, make, do, create, modify, and assist the divine hierarchy in building the world. Thoughts and analysis are ***inside the cave of demons*** IF they remain within the mind. When thoughts and analysis are brought outside of ***the cave of demons*** and applied in the world to build things, and tested by time, karma, the forces of nature, gravity, corrosion, entropy, endurance, and harmony, then there is wisdom, progress and evolution.
  - a. The path of divinity is a spiritual path that seeks cooperation with divine hierarchy. Thoughts (stuff inside the mind) are brought outside of mind, outside ***the cave of demons***, and applied to the making of things in the world.
  - b. The proposition that 'reality is in the mind' means the stuff inside the mind remains ***inside the cave of demons***, there is no soul, spirit, god, or purpose in evolution outside of the mind. If reality is in the mind then what about climate change? Climate change is also part of everything that is in the mind. If the dire predictions of climate change do occur, it will not occur in my lifetime. When I die, the mind terminates and everything else in the mind also terminates, including climate change. Inside is not outside; 'reality is in the mind' is not a path that leads to nature outside of the mind.

#### ***CASE 16: Changsha's “Returning to Mountains, Rivers, and the Great Earth”***

***Zen master Jingcen of Changsha [Zhaoxian] was once asked by a monastic, “How do you turn the mountains, rivers, and great earth and return to the self?”***

***Changsha said, “How do you turn the self and return to the mountains, rivers, and great earth?”***

1. ***Asked by monastic...turn mountain...return to the self?*** The monastic got it backwards; the ***great earth*** does not need to ***return to the self***, in the mind. The mind interprets sensory data about the world outside; the sensory data may be an illusion; and the external world may be an illusion to the mind.
2. ***Changsha said, “How do you turn the self and return...”*** Self needs to return to the great earth; not the other way around. The monastic got it backwards by asking how earth return to self, instead of self return to earth.

3. Alternate answer to the monastic's question: replace self and self-identity with spirit. Be at one with all things in spirit. Mountains, rivers, and great earth return to spirit; not return to self.

### **CASE 17: Xiangyan's Great Enlightenment**

**Zen master Zhixian of Mount Xiangyan [Xideng] was bright in nature. Being at the assembly of Guishan, he was well learned and had extensive memory.**

**Guishan one day said to Xiangyan, "Everything you say is what you've memorized from commentaries. Now I am going to ask you a question. When you were an infant—before you could even distinguish east from west—at that time, how was it?"**

**Xiangyan spoke and presented his understanding, explaining the principle, but could not get approval. He went through the texts he had collected and studied, but he could not find an answer that would satisfy the master.**

**Deeply grieved and in tears, he burned all his books and commentaries. Then he said to himself, "I will never understand Zen in this lifetime. I will become a hermit monastic and enter a mountain and practice."**

**Thus he entered Mount Wudang and built a hut near the grave site of National Teacher Nanyang. One day while he was sweeping the path, a pebble struck a stalk of bamboo and made a cracking sound. At that moment he suddenly had a great enlightenment experience. He wrote a poem expressing his understanding:**

**One crack and all knowledge has dissolved.**

**The struggle is over.**

**I follow the ancient Way, not lapsing into doubt.**

**Dignified bearing and conduct**

**that is beyond sound and form;**

**no trace remains of my passing.**

**Those who have mastered the Way**

**call this the unsurpassable activity.**

**He presented this poem to Guishan, who said, "This fellow has penetrated it completely."**

1. Nouns and verb: fact, information, data, knowledge, news, good news, gospel, commentaries ...are nouns; **Zhixian had extensive memory** for information (noun). Whereas, to be, being, work, sweep, act, bearing, conduct = verb.
2. **While he was sweeping ...One crack and all knowledge has dissolved.** Sweeping is verb, knowledge is noun.
3. Note: noun-verb relationships are not opposites, they are complementary in the world of manifestation, where things in the world move, interact, dwell in time with a beginning and end. Apple (noun) falls (verb). Life (noun) evolve (verb). River (noun) flows (verb). Whereas good and evil; light and dark; rise and fall; forward and backward... are pairs of nouns in opposition or pairs of verbs in opposition; but nouns are not opposite of verbs. Zhixian was focused on nouns when he was gathering information, facts, data, knowledge, opinions, **commentaries** and **principles**; later he had a great realization about verbs, act, do, work, sweep...
4. **When you were an infant...how was it?** It was before there was pebble and bamboo; before manifestation, there was spirit, spirit is before '**sound and form**'. To be in the moment is **the unsurpassable activity**. **Sweeping the path** and **cracking sound**

facilitated **a great enlightenment experience**. Do the best that you can in whatever that you are doing, in sweeping the path.

### **CASE 20: Changsha's "Stop Illusory Thinking"**

**Changsha was once asked by Emperor's Secretary Du, "When you chop an earthworm into two pieces, both pieces keep moving. I wonder, in which piece is the buddha nature?"**

**Changsha said, "Don't have illusory thoughts."**

**Du said, "How are we to understand that they are both moving?"**

**Changsha said, "Understand that air and fire are not yet scattered." Du said nothing.**

**Changsha called Du, and Du responded, "Yes?"**

**Changsha said, "Isn't this your true self?"**

**Du said, "Apart from my answering, is there another true self?"**

**Changsha said, "I can't call you Emperor."**

**Du said, "If so, would my not answering also be my true self?"**

**Changsha said, "It's not a matter of answering me or not. But since the beginningless kalpa, the question to answer or not has been the root of birth and death." Then he recited a verse:**

**Students of the Way don't know the truth.**

**They only know their past consciousness.**

**This is the basis of endless birth and death.**

**The deluded call it the original self.**

1. 'Path of being' and 'path of divinity': Du asked about the manifestation of things, how is it that the earthworm in 2 parts both move. Questions and answers about the workings of nature lead to better understanding of the planet. Du travels the path of divinity, to build widgets, manage the resources of the emperor, assist in holding a nation together, and to be an assistant to lesser gods in co-creating the universe.
2. Changsha travels the path of being, be here now. The path of being does not need to answer questions about the buddha nature of a cut worm, or the **true self**.
3. **Student of the Way don't know the truth** = poetry is not river. 'Student of the Way' live the truth instead of acquiring knowledge, information, data, facts, scripture, gospel, description, opinion, ...about truth, the nature and workings of the universe or how 2 parts of the earthworm move.

### **CASE 25: The Master's Portrait**

**Zen master Guichen of Dizang Monastery held a memorial service for his teacher Xuansha. He invited Baoen Xuanze and served him the evening meal.**

**When Baoen looked at the altar, there was no picture of Master Xuansha. So he asked, "Do you have a portrait of your master?"**

**Dizang folded his hands, bowed, and said, "Look!"**

**Baoen said, "There is no picture."**

**Dizang said, "It's clear that you don't see it, but it's here."**

1. **Portrait** as a representation of the person; or the presences of the person. Portrait as a representation of person is a 2 dimensional compression, drawn by an artist using

restricted set of colorant, base on interpretation of a selected set of sensors, with limited range of detection; thus many steps removed from the presences of the person.

2. **Baoen** was looking at the picture as representation of person.
3. **It's clear that you don't see it, but it's here**, Dizang referred to the presences of person.

### **CASE 26: The National Teacher's "Pure Dharma Body"**

**Zen master Huizhong of Nanyang [Dazheng] was asked by Emperor Suzong of the Tang dynasty, "What is the samadhi of no conflict [arana samadhi]?"**

**Nanyang said, "Your Majesty, go trample on Vairocana's head."**

**Emperor Su said, "I don't understand."**

**Nanyang said, "Don't regard the self as the pure dharma body."**

1. **Vairocana Buddha: the luminous buddha who embodies the reality of the universe.**  
= manifestation of things;
2. **Head** = region of sensory perception (sight, sound, taste, smell and touch), and interpretations of sensory data (in the brain).
3. **Go trample on Vairocana's head**= go work out your existence in the world of manifestation of things using limited sensory perceptions in the head and analysis of sensory data in the head. While dwelling in the world of manifestation, the self differentiates from not-self and discovers 3 paths: the path of salvation, the path of being and the path of divinity. The path of salvation renounces the world of things and seeks salvation through devotion to a savior or deity. The path of being transcends the world of things by being at one with all things. The path of divinity continues to trample in the world of things to build better ecosystems, to assist lesser gods in the co-creation of the universe. Emperor Suzong travels the path of divinity that participates in building nations, managing the country's resources, organizing communities and protecting the welfare of citizens.
  - a. The head receives sensory input (sight, sound, odor, taste and touch) from nature, interprets the data in the brain.
  - b. Inside is not outside; stuff inside the head is not stuff outside the head. You must make use of your thoughts (stuff in the mind) by doing work outside in nature. **Go trample on Vairocana's head:** take sensory input from nature; analyze and catalyze the sensory data; then turn it into something good outside in nature.
  - c. It is not enough to talk about 'good' and tell others what they should do. You must work out your own individual karma. You must overcome this: **There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man** (Mark:7:15, The New Testament of the Holy Bible, King James Version). Mark 7:15 is overcome by applying thought inside the head to doing good work outside in nature.
  - d. The work outside in nature is tested by time and manifestation and found to be real instead of imaginary; tested by karma (reciprocity, do unto others as you want others do unto you) and found to be just; tested by harmony with nature and found to be beautiful; tested by conservation of energy and resources. Nature is an external agent that test the understanding gained inside the head. Strength and clarity of wisdom is the results of many lives in the world of manifestation; wisdom reappearing in future lives as 'spontaneous' enlightenment, instinct, innate wisdom and talent.

- e. Saying it differently, Mark 7:15 is overcome by: ***Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father*** (John 14:12, King James Version of the Bible). 'Work' and 'do' is guided by a belief in the good.
4. Huizong travels the path of being; to be at one with all things. The path of being does not lead to separation, identifications, social stratification, personnel management, building empires, making widgets, or shuffling molecules.
5. ***Don't regard the self as the pure dharma body (Dharmakaya (S.). One of the three kayas, bodies of the Buddha; essential reality.*** The self is not the pure dharma body; self separated from nature is not the pure dharma body; self separated from doing good deeds is not the pure dharma body.

### **CASE 28: "Dragon Howling in a Withered Tree"**

***Xiangyan was once asked by a monastic, "What is the Way?"***

***Xiangyan said, "A dragon howling in a withered tree."***

***The monastic said, "What does it mean?"***

***Xiangyan said, "Eyeballs in a skull."***

***Later, another monastic asked Shishuang Chuyuan, "What is a dragon howling in a dead tree?"***

***Shishuang said, "It still has joy."***

***The monastic said, "What are the eyeballs in a skull?"***

***Shishuang said, "They still have senses."***

***Later, another monastic asked Zen master Benji of Caoshan [Yuanzheng], "What is the dragon's howling in a dead tree?"***

***Caoshan said, "Bloodstream has not stopped."***

***The monastic said, "What are the eyeballs in a skull?"***

***Caoshan said, "Dry all the way."***

***The monastic said, "I wonder, can anyone hear it?"***

***Caoshan said, "Throughout the entire earth, there is no one who does not hear it."***

***The monastic said, "Which verse does the dragon sing?"***

***Caoshan said, "I don't know which verse it is, but all those who hear it are lost."***

1. ***dragon*** = spirit;
2. ***withered tree*** = physical tree without tree spirit; the world of manifestation without spirit
3. ***A dragon howling in a withered tree*** = spiritual traveler (dragon) in the world of manifestation (withered tree).
4. ***Eyeballs in a skull*** = sensory perception of the world of things; skull = head with eyes, ears, mouth, nose and skin that gather sensory data about the world outside; and brain to interpret sensory data.
5. ***Those who hear it are lost*** to the withered world of things and enter life in spirit.

### **CASE 29: Daowu Won't Say**

***Jianyuan Zhongxing once accompanied his teacher Daowu on a condolence call to a family funeral. When they arrived, Jianyuan tapped the coffin and said, "Is this life or is it death?"***

***Daowu said, "I won't say life. I won't say death."***

***Jianyuan said, "Why won't you say?"***

**Daowu said, “I won’t say. I won’t say.”**

**On their way back, Jianyuan said, “You should quickly say it for me, or I will hit you.”**

**Daowu said, “Hit me if you will, but I will not say.”**

**Jianyuan hit him.**

**After returning to the monastery, Daowu said to Jianyuan, “You should leave for a while. I am afraid if the head monastic finds out about this he will make trouble for you.”**

**After Daowu passed away, Jianyuan went to see Daowu’s successor, Shishuang Qingzhu, told him the story, and asked for guidance.**

**Shishuang said, “I won’t say life. I won’t say death.”**

**Jianyuan said, “Why won’t you say it?”**

**Shishuang said, “I won’t say it. I won’t say it.”**

**Jianyuan immediately realized it.**

1. Jianyuan wanted answers = data, fact, information, knowledge, descriptions, opinion, ...
2. **I won’t say** Daowu and Shishuang did not want to add more knowledge, information, data, facts, descriptions, news, good news, gospels... Downloading wisdom from the mind of god does not add more wisdom to the mind of god. Preaching the word of god does not add more wisdom to the mind of god.

### **CASE 30: Caoshan’s “No Change”**

**Caoshan bid farewell to his teacher Dongshan Ligjie. Dongshan said, “Where are you going?” Caoshan said, “I am going to the place of no changing.”**

**Dongshan said, “Can you leave from the place of no changing?”**

**Caoshan said, “Leaving is not change.”**

1. **‘I am going to the place of no change’** = no change; or beyond the ability to perceive change; or a place outside of time, in the spiritual realm. Time is motion. If there is no motion, there is no time; if there is no change, there is no time. **The place of no change** has no time.
2. **Leaving is not change**, not leaving is also not change. Be at one with all things, it does not matter if Caoshan leave or not leave.

### **CASE 31: Deshan’s Thirty Blows**

**Zen master Xuanjian of Deshan [Jianxing] said to the assembly during an informal talk, “I am not going to give an answer tonight. Anyone who asks a question will get thirty blows.”**

**A monastic came up and bowed. Deshan hit him.**

**The monastic said, “I haven’t asked a question. Why did you hit me?”**

**Deshan said, “Where are you from?”**

**The monastic said, “I came from Silla [in Korea].”**

**Deshan said, “Before you even got on board the ship, you deserved thirty blows.”**

1. **Anyone who asks a question will get thirty blows** = anyone who seeks information, facts, data, knowledge are still caught in the world of manifestation and sensory perception, using mind to categorize the world into ‘is’ and ‘is not’.
2. **Where are you from?** a physical location or state of consciousness. The monastic responded with a physical location: **Silla**

**CASE 32: Taiyuan Fans Himself**

**Senior Monastic Fu of Taiyuan asked his student Gushan, “Where are the nostrils you had before your parents were born?”**

**Gushan said, “Born right now.”**

**Taiyuan did not approve and said, “You ask me and I will tell you.”**

**Gushan said, “Where are the nostrils you had before your parents were born?” Taiyuan just fanned himself.**

1. **nostrils you had before your parents were born** = while you were in spirit, prior to the manifestation of things
2. **Taiyuan just fanned himself** = be here now, be in the moment, be at one with spirit

**CASE 33: Caoshan’s “Falling and Rising”**

**Caoshan was once asked by a monastic, “It has been said since ancient times that no one has fallen on the ground who has not risen without using the ground. What is falling?”**

**Caoshan said, “If you are in accord with this, falling is just as it is.”**

**The monastic said, “What is rising?”**

**Caoshan said, “Rising!”**

1. **Falling is just as it is:** 'is', be, be here now. **If you are in accord with** the path of being, then be in the moment, be at one with spirit
2. Newton’s third law of motion: for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Rising up from the ground requires pushing against the ground and the ground resist the person’s thrust wherein the person rises up. Rise-fall; advance-retreat; action-reaction; positive-negative; and winner-loser... are zero-sum gains, symmetry, and duality. Dualities are pairs of 2 opposing ideas; noun-noun opposition or verb-verb oppositions.
3. However there are non-duality and asymmetries where the net gain is not zero; gain in one does not require loss of another. Noun-verb relationships are asymmetrical.
4. Light and darkness is asymmetrical: imagine 2 rooms connected by a door, one room is lit, the other room is dark. When the door is open, light floods into the dark room but darkness does not flood into the lit room. Light is asymmetrical with respect to darkness.
5. ‘Brighter the light, darker the shadows’ is an apparent symmetry that relies on point-source of light. Under diffuse lighting or multiple sources of light, the brighter the light, the more light in the world. Increase in light is unrelated to darkness.
6. Temperature is a measure of molecular motion. At zero degree Kelvin, there is no molecular motion. Temperature is either zero degrees Kelvin or greater than zero. There is ‘motion’ or ‘no motion’; but there is no negative motion: temperature is asymmetrical.
7. Entropy is a measure of disorder. In a closed system without external energy input, the amount of disorder increases with time: entropy is equal to or greater than zero; entropy does not decrease (the second law of thermodynamics). Entropy is asymmetrical
8. Applying entropy to ‘the arrow of time’; time is asymmetrical. We remember the past but we do not remember the future. (see <Arrow of time> Wikipedia; A Brief History of Time by Stephen Hawking, 1988, Bantam Books; or The Order of Time, by Carlo Rovelli, 2018, Penguin Books)
9. When lions prey upon wildebeest, both lion and wildebeest specie evolve. The weak and vulnerable wildebeest dies and alters the collective gene pool of wildebeest. Wildebeest



as a collective evolve and improve their strategies for evasion. When bats eat moths, both species evolve, develop and improve their strategies for foraging, evasion and counter evasion: evolution is asymmetrical; the evolutionary gain in foraging strategy by one species does not require the loss in evolutionary strategy of another species.

10. Enlightenment is attained by being in the world, acquiring experience in the imperfections of life and resistance. Enlightenment of one does not require un-enlightenment of another: enlightenment is asymmetrical and outside of duality.
11. While we dwell in the world of manifestation, temperature, time, evolution, wisdom, karma and enlightenment continues asymmetrically. The increase in experience and wisdom does not require a decrease or negative experience somewhere else. Symmetry (zero sum gain) and asymmetry (non zero gain) coexists in the world of manifestation. ***What is rising?...rising*** without reference to duality, non-duality, symmetry of Newton's third law of motion, or asymmetry of entropy.

#### ***CASE 34: The World-Honored One's "Intimate Speech"***

***Zen master Daoying of Mount Yunju [Hongjue] was once asked by a government official who had brought an offering, "It is said that the World-Honored One had intimate speech and Mahakasyapa did not hide it. What is the World-Honored One's intimate speech?"***

***Yunju said, "Officer." The officer said, "Yes!"***

***Yunju said, "Do you understand?"***

***The officer said, "No, I don't."***

***Yunju said, "If you don't understand it, that is the World-Honored One's intimate speech. If you do understand it that is Mahakasyapa's not hiding it."***

1. ***The intimate speech:*** to be at one with all things. To be intimate with nature; nature is. The intimate speech harmonizes the difference between 'nature' and 'perception of nature', between 'spirit' and 'manifestation of spirit'.
2. ***If you don't understand it, that is the World-Honored One's intimate speech:*** to be at one with all things does not require analysis, understanding, or not understanding.

#### ***CASE 35: Touzi's "Harmonizing the Ten Bodies"***

***Touzi Datong was once asked by a monastic, "What is the harmonizing of the ten bodies of the Buddha?"***

***Touzi got down from the sitting platform and stood with folded hands.***

***On another occasion a monastic asked, "What distance is there between ordinary ones and sacred ones?"***

***Touzi got down from the sitting platform and stood with folded hands.***

1. ***Stood with folded hands*** = is, be, here, now. Alternatively, Touzi could have raised his fist, held up the whisk, throw down the meditation staff, or shouted,

#### ***CASE 36: Deshan's "Assembly on Vulture Peak"***

***Deshan Dehai was once asked by a monastic, "Who was able to hear Sakyamuni Buddha at the assembly on Vulture Peak?"***

***Deshan said, "The acarya heard it."***

***The monastic said, "I wonder what was spoken at the assembly on Vulture Peak?"***

***Deshan said, “The acarya understands it.”***

1. ***Who was able to hear Sakyamuni Buddha at the assembly ...what was spoken.***  
Poetry is not river. ‘Talking about river’ is not river; ‘talking about wisdom’ is not living in accordance to wisdom; purveying information is not living the life that you believe in. The monk inquired about words, information, data, knowledge, fact, opinion, comment =nouns; and overlook the vibration of words (activity)
2. ***acarya: master of dharma, divine law*** = one who is able to awaken the inner being through harmonic vibration, as oppose to one who talk about the divine law with description without the power of speech.

***CASE 38: Xuefeng’s “Turning the Dharma Wheel”***

***Zen master Yicun of Mount Xuefeng [Zhenjue] pointed with his finger at a furnace and said to Xuansha, “All buddhas in the three worlds are in here, turning the great dharma wheel.”***

***Xuansha said, “The king’s regulations are rather strict.”***

***Xuefeng said, “How so?”***

***Xuansha said, “Stealing is not permitted.”***

1. ***All buddhas ... are in here, turning the great dharma wheel:*** a statement of fact (noun) concerning the activity of flame in a furnace as a manifestation of buddhas turning. So, what of it.
2. ***The king’s regulations are rather strict=*** law of karma is rather strict, the effort of ***all buddhas... turning the great dharma wheel*** accrues to the buddhas. Buddha’s karma does not accrue to the speaker who describes the buddha’s turning. Individual karma of worker is not transferrable to the observer of work. My karma is my karma; your karma is your karma; do your own work, act, be (verb).
3. ***Stealing*** the accrued karma from all the buddhas ***is not permitted***. You must do your own work. Talking about the works of Buddha accrues the karma of speech, not the karma of work; preaching about the works of a savior accrues the karma of speech; not the karma of work.

***CASE 41: Shitou’s “Ask the Pillar”***

***Shitou was once asked by a monastic, “What is the significance of Bodhidharma’s coming from India?”***

***Shitou said, “Ask the pillar.”***

***The monastic said, “I don’t understand it.”***

***Shitou said, “I don’t understand it either.”***

1. ***Bodhidharma coming from India*** is part of spiritual evolution of humanity.
2. ***Pillar*** = that which supports heaven, that which separate heaven from earth, that which prevents the unity of heaven with earth, or physical object.
3. ***Ask the pillar:*** = you are the pillar; ask yourself why you separate heaven from earth; why you do not see the unity of all things. You are your own pillar when you separate self from nature. Normal human hearing is 20-20,000 hertz. This is subconscious self-isolation from infrasound that whale, crocodile, and pigeon hear; and self-isolation from ultrasound that bees, bats, coyote hears. Normal human vision is in the visible range of

the electromagnetic spectrum. This is subconscious self-isolation from nature by ignoring infrared spectrum that snakes, insects and frogs see; ignoring ultraviolet spectrum that cat, dog, fish, hedgehog, spider, bee, rat, bird, and moths see; and ignoring gamma rays from distant galaxies. Normal human vision is trichromatic; this is subconscious self-isolation from full spectrum of color in nature. Humans have 10 million olfactory sensors; dogs have 300 million olfactory sensors; this is subconscious self-isolation from the full spectrum of odors in nature. Some dogs are trained to detect illegal drugs, cancer, Parkinson's disease and onset of epileptic seizures; humans do not, and self-isolate from that spectrum of odor in nature. Humans lack sensors to detect magnetic or electric field that some animals have; this is subconscious self-isolation from electromagnetic pollution generated by our activities. Humans have 5 senses to perceive the world; this is subconscious self-isolation from the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and higher sensory perceptions. Normal human senses perceive 3 spatial dimensions; this is subconscious self-isolation from higher spatial dimensions of nature. The 4<sup>th</sup> spatial dimension is ether where plant spirits guide plant evolution; the 5<sup>th</sup> spatial dimension is desire, or astral world where animal spirit guides animal evolution, and where the dead go to review deeds of their past life and develop conscience and intuition derived from past deeds; the 6<sup>th</sup> spatial dimension of thought is where race spirits guide nations and archetypal forces shape continents and where the Memory of Nature (Akashic Record) is located ...All these higher dimensions reveal the oneness of nature. But we are **the pillar** and isolate self from nature through limited sensory detection of nature. Analytical thinking adds more separation and self-isolation by breaking the complex whole of nature into its components. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

4. **Bodhidharma's coming from India** offered a spiritual path that connects the separateness by being at one with all things, being in the moment, here, now, without isolation, separation, division, discrimination, judgment. Earth is not separated from heaven; nature is not separated from the perceiver. Successful self-isolation asserts there is no god because we looked in the visible range of the electromagnetic spectrum and did not see god, by inference there is no god in the ultraviolet, gamma or infrared range; we listened in the 20-20,000 Hz range and did not hear god, by inference assert god does not speak in the infrasound or ultrasound range. At the atomic scale, our instruments determine that electrons and nucleus occupy less than 1% of the space in atoms, the remaining 99+% of space is unoccupied, by inference god does not exist in the 99+% of the unoccupied portion of the atom. We perceive the 3 spatial dimensions and did not find god, by inference assert god does not exist in all other spatial dimensions beyond the 3 that we perceive. We do not see the dead using our 5 senses, by inference the dead do not exist after they passed beyond the detection limit of our 5 senses. The success of self-isolation is to assert: there is no god, no karma, no reincarnation, no higher spatial dimensions, no other sensory detectors beyond the normal 5 senses; earth is a dead lump of minerals, evolution of life has no purpose, and the mind can be reduced to a computer or Boltzmann brain. We self-isolate from nature by the limitation of sensory detectors; we are our own **pillar** when we separate self from nature.
5. If **pillar** is physical object, then pounding sand, shuffling molecules, kicking the pillar will not cause the physical objects to divulge the purpose of life. Reductionist thinking uses physical molecules and pillar as a leverage to categorize, compartmentalize and separate nature, society and spirit; to prevent the unity of all things.
6. **I don't understand** = the beginning step. You must seek the spirit to ascertain the purpose of life; or be at one with all things in the world of manifestation to realize purpose.

7. **I don't understand it either** = I don't understand why you are so obstinate, standing as a **pillar** and separate self from nature. Find the unity of heaven and earth, manifestation and purpose of manifestation; be at one with nature, society and spirit.

#### **CASE 42: Jingqing's Thirty Blows**

*Jingqing asked a monastic, "Where have you been?"*

*The monastic said, "Three Peaks."*

*Jingqing said, "Where were you during the summer?"*

*The monastic said, "Five Peaks."*

*Jingqing said, "I give you thirty blows."*

*The monastic said, "What is my fault?"*

*Jingqing said, "The problem is that you go in and out of monasteries."*

1. **Where have you been:** a physical location or level of consciousness.
2. The monastic identified 'where' with locations, **Three Peaks** and **Five Peaks**, instead of level of consciousness. Being at the physical location of monasteries is not the same as being in spirit with the teachings associated with the monasteries.

#### **CASE 43: Guizong Cuts a Snake**

*Zen master Zhichang of Guizong Monastery was cutting grass when a lecturer came by to study with him. It so happened that they saw a snake passing by. Guizong cut the snake in two with his spade.*

*The lecturer said, "I have heard of your fame for a long time. But now I see, after all, that you are just a sramana of coarse practice."*

*Guizong said, "Am I coarse, or is it you that is coarse?"*

*The lecturer said, "What is coarse?"*

*Guizong held up the spade.*

*The lecturer said, "What is fine?"*

*Guizong made a gesture of cutting a snake.*

*The lecturer said, "If this is so, then I will practice accordingly."*

*Guizong said, "Aside from practicing accordingly, where did you see me cut the snake?"*

*The lecturer was silent.*

1. **Lecturer:** purveyor of information, one who talks. Talk is that which comes out of the head. Sensory perception of nature is that which goes into the head. (***There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man:*** Mark 7:15, also Matthew 15:11 New Testament of the Bible, King James Version).
2. **'What is coarse?** Guizong held up the spade; spade = noun
3. **What is fine?** Guizong made a gesture of cutting a snake: gesture, cut = verb.
4. Achievements in life are determined by activity, not by things.
5. **Where did you see me cut the snake.** Where: a physical location or state of mind; from what state of mind are you seeing?

**CASE 44: Guishan's "I Have Already Exhausted Myself for You"**

**Guishan sat on the teaching seat. A monastic came up and said, "Master, please expound the dharma for the assembly."**

**Guishan said, "I have already exhausted myself for you."**

1. **Sat on the seat** (in silence): this moment, be here now.

**CASE 45: Xuansha's "The Three Vehicles and the Twelve Divisions of Sutras"**

**Xuansha was once asked by a monastic, "The Three Vehicles and the Twelve Divisions of Sutras are unnecessary. What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from India?"**

**Xuansha said, "The Three Vehicles and the Twelve Divisions of Sutras are totally unnecessary."**

1. **Three Vehicles. According to Mahayana Buddhism, the three ways to bring people across the ocean of birth and death to the shore of enlightenment**
2. **The meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from India** = to provide a new path for teaching Buddhadharma without the extra baggage of definitions, terminologies, understanding about different vehicles and divisions, and without associated costumes, ceremonies and rituals. Being in the moment, being at one with all things does not require knowledge, information, data, facts or opinions about different vehicles and divisions.

**CASE 47: Guishan's "Do Not Betray Others"**

**One day after sitting Guishan pointed at the straw sandals and said to Yangshan, "All hours of the day, we receive people's support. Don't betray them."**

**Yangshan said, "Long ago in Sudatta's garden, the Buddha expounded just this."**

**Guishan said, "That's not enough. Say more."**

**Yangshan said, "When it is cold, to wear socks for others is not prohibited."**

1. **Don't betray them** = make good use of the gifts received.
2. **Long ago in Sudatta's garden, the Buddha expounded just this**: the difference between bodhisattva and arhat
  - a. **Bodhisattva (S.). One who practices the Buddha Way and compassionately postpones final enlightenment for the sake of others; the ideal of practice in Mahayana Buddhism.**
  - b. **Arhat (S.): "Worthy one" who has attained the highest level of the Hinayana, that of "no- more-learning"; the ideal of early Buddhism**
3. Bodhisattva's karma refers to planetary karma or karma of all sentient beings; arhat's karma refers to individual karma. From the perspective of arhat, my karma is my karma; your karma is your karma; individual karma is not transferable. At the level of the bodhisattva, planetary karma is transferred to all sentient being on the planet. At the level of a solar deity, Christ, the solar karma extends from the sun to all the orbiting planets, moons and space in between.
4. **To wear socks for other is not prohibited** = a double negative; not and prohibited cancels yielding: to wear socks for other is allowed. **Wear socks for others** when it is cold does not help those who are cold at the level of individual karma; eating heartily does not help those who are hungry at the level of individual karma. However, there is community karma, national karma, species karma and planetary karma. At the level of

community or national karma: ***to wear socks for other is not prohibited*** because both those who wear socks for others and those who are cold contribute to the community and national karma.

5. Mozart's music benefited the community of Vienna, and humanity for centuries after his death. Mozart accrues the karma of composing music, and the appreciation of his music for centuries after his death. The banker and financier who commissioned the composition accrue the karma of financial investment and when Mozart died financial investment terminates. The banker and financiers do not accrue Mozart's karma of music creation. William Shakespeare's works help standardize the English language, provided dialog and teaching on individual karma and karma of statecrafts for centuries after his death; Leonardo's Mona Lisa gave inspiration to countless individuals for centuries long after the original creation. Karmic consequences of inspiring art have long term impact on humanity and affect the national karma, and karma of humanity. Those who support the artist financially terminate their support when the artist died; they accrued karma of financial investment; they do not accrue the karma of artistic inspiration. Those who give tithing receive the karma of tithing, not the karma of what the recipient do with the tithing. Individual karma accrues to the individual; the deeds of the individual also contribute to the national karma and planetary karma.
6. Solomon's Temple was built by Hiram and his workers. The karma for building Solomon's temple accrues to Hiram and his workers; whereas Solomon accrues the karma financial management and the karma of dutiful transfer of blueprint from designer (Jehovah) to builder (Hiram and his workers); Solomon did not build Solomon's Temple, he financed it. Both Hiram and Solomon contributed to the community and national karma; Hiram for building the temple, Solomon for issuing wise judgment from the temple. (Nouns and verb: temple = noun; issuing judgment from the temple = verb)
7. Gazelles and wildebeest travel together to evade lions. The death of an individual wildebeest alters the gene pool of the wildebeest species. The impact of the dead wildebeest extends to wildebeest, gazelle and lion species as they evolve their strategies for food, survival, evasion, and counter evasion. There is individual karma (of the wildebeest that died); group karma of the wildebeest, gazelle, and lion species; karma of animal evolution; and planetary karma of biological life on earth.
8. Carbon-14, a product of nuclear testing, has a half-life of 5,770 year; after 5,770 years, half of the radioactive carbon-14 would remain, after 11,540 years 1/4 of the carbon-14 would remain, after 17,310 years 1/8 of the carbon-14 would remain... Plutonium-239 has a half-life of 24,000 years. Decision maker, theoreticians, designer, workers in manufacturing nuclear weapons accrue individual karma of nuclear poisoning; citizens of countries that make and deploy nuclear weapons accrue the national karma of nuclear poisoning; the entire planet is impacted by nuclear radiation and accrue a planetary karma of nuclear poisoning. At 24,000 year half-life of plutonium-239, there is time enough for all of humanity to die, reborn, die and reborn again, 24 times before reaching the half-life radiation level; ample time to face the karmic consequence of nuclear radiation; to become conscious of the impact on human health and the planet, and to make amends through acts of service to the planet. (The lifetime between birth and the next birth is approximately 1000 years for humans.) Animals and plants are also impacted by nuclear radiation, they accrued planetary karma; they will be compensated in the future.
9. Our choice of food, clothing, shelter and transportation has long term impact on the environment. A vegan diet spares the lives of animals, reduces the carbon footprint and contributes to the vegan's karma in the next life, as well as the planetary karma. Of the

CO2 emitted from food production and burning fossil fuel 75% will be absorbed by the ocean and vegetation in a few century; 25% remains in the atmosphere for 1,000 years; 10% remain for 100,000 years (The Long Thaw: How Humans are Changing the Next 100,000 years of the Earth's Climate. By D. Archer. Princeton Univ. Press 2008). The 10% of CO2 that remains for 100,000 years is ample time for humans alive today to die, reborn, die and reborn again 100 times at the 1000 year interval between lifetime; ample time to see the consequence of burning fossil fuel, to make amends, to expiate the accrued planetary karma resulting from burning fossil fuel.

- a. For humans, the interval between each incarnation, the time between birth in one life and birth in the next life, is approximately 1000 years.
  - i. ***Every Ego is born twice during the time the Sun is passing through one sign of the Zodiac; and, as the soul itself is necessarily double-sexed, in order to obtain all experiences, it is reborn alternately in a male and a female body. This is because the experience of one sex differs widely from that of the other. At the same time, the outside conditions are not greatly altered in one thousand years and therefore permit the entity to receive experience in the same identical environment from the standpoint of both man and woman.*** (The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception by Max Heindel, 1909, 26<sup>th</sup> edition p 160)
  - ii. ***Every spirit is reborn twice during the time it takes the sun by precession to go through a sign of the zodiac, once as man and once as woman. This is done in order that it may gain the experiences to be had in that sign from the viewpoint of both sexes. There are many modifications to this rule according to the necessities of individual spirits, for the law is not blind but it is under the administration of great beings called the Recording Angels in the Christian terminology.*** (Teachings of an Initiate, by Max Heindel, 1978 7<sup>th</sup> edition, p 68)
10. Is a member of a community responsible for the deeds of others in the same community; to what extent do deeds of one individual affect other members of the community or affect other species, or the planetary karma or the universe? ***Long ago in Sudatta's garden, the Buddha expounded just this:*** by way of discussing the difference between an arhat and a bodhisattva. The arhat attains illumination, resolves the individual karmic debt and is freed from the wheel of rebirth. The bodhisattva is an enlighten person that has resolve the individual karmic debt but chooses to remain on earth to affect the planetary karma; there is individual karma, community karma, national karma and planetary karma. ***When it is cold, to wear socks for others is not prohibited,*** because of affects on community karma.

#### **CASE 48: Xuansha's Blank Letter**

***Xuansha one day sent a monastic to deliver a letter to Xuefeng. Xuefeng received the monastic while he was teaching, opened the letter, and found a blank piece of paper. He showed it to the assembly and said, "Do you understand this?"***

***After a while he said, "Can't you see what he says? Virtuous persons have the same understanding, even though they are one thousand li apart."***

***The monastic went back and reported this to Xuansha.***

***Xuansha said, "The old man on the mountain passed by me without knowing it."***

1. **Blank** = empty = no thing = in the realm of spirit, not in the realm of manifestation, be in the moment; nothing more needs to be said or written on the **blank piece of paper**.

#### **CASE 54: Baizhang's Second Visit to Mazu**

**Zen master Huaihai of Baizhang went back to study with Mazu. Mazu held up a whisk.**

**Baizhang said, "Does it stay with its function, or does it go beyond its function?"**

**Mazu hung the whisk back where it had been. Baizhang stood there for a while. Mazu said, "How can you guide people by flapping the lips?"**

**Baizhang took the whisk and held it up.**

**Mazu said, "Does it stay with its function or does it go beyond its function?"**

**Baizhang hung the whisk back where it had been.**

**Mazu shouted.**

**Baizhang told Huangbo later, "Some time ago I was yelled at by Mazu. It made me deaf for three days."**

1. **Whisk** = an object (noun) or use of the object; **function** = name of activity, what the whisk is used for.
2. **Does it stay with its function, or does it go beyond its function?** Does being startled and awoken by the whisk derive from hit (verb) or from whisk (noun)? The function of a whisk in a barn, welding shop, kitchen or meditation hall have different function depending on who wields it.
3. **Flapping the lips:** talking, purveying information, data, knowledge, news, facts, opinion, conjectures, speculations, comments, criticism, complaints...(stuff from inside the head)
4. **Mazu shouted.** = So, the function does not stay with the whisk; other objects (staff, chan stick, or fist) or being shouted at can be used to awaken.

#### **CASE 57: Where Wisdom Cannot Reach**

**Zen master Zongzhi [Yuanzhi] of Mount Daowu left Yaoshan and went to visit Nanquan.**

**Nanquan said, "Reverend, what is your name?"**

**Daowu said, "Zongzhi [source wisdom]."**

**Nanquan said, "Where wisdom does not reach, what do you make of the source?"**

**Daowu said, "I would rather not speak."**

**Nanquan said, "Bright and clear; but if you speak of it, horns will emerge."**

**Three days later, Daowu was in the washroom, sewing with Yunyan. Passing by, Nanquan saw him and said, "The other day you said that you would rather not say it. And I said, 'If you say it, horns will emerge.' How then do you practice?"**

**Daowu left and entered the monastics' hall. Then Nanquan went away. Daowu came back and sat down.**

**Yunyan said, "Senior brother, why didn't you answer the master?" Daowu said, "How come you are so brilliant?"**

**Yunyan did not press further. He went to [see] Nanquan and said, "[About the question of the other day], why did Ascetic Zhi [Daowu] not answer you?"**

**Nanquan said, "He practices among other types of beings."**

**Yunyan said, "What is practicing among other types of beings?"**

**Nanquan said, "Don't you see what was said? 'Where wisdom does not reach.' 'I prefer not to say it.' 'If you say it, then horns will emerge.' Thus you go toward different types of beings."**



***Yunyan did not understand it. Seeing that Yunyan did not accept it, Nanquan said, "This person does not have a reason to stay here."***

***Both [Daowu and Yunyan] went back to Yaoshan. Yaoshan saw them return and asked Yunyan, "Where have you been?"***

***Yunyan said, "I have been with Nanquan."***

***Yaoshan said, "What did Nanquan say?" Yunyan told him the story.***

***Yaoshan said, "How did you understand his teaching at that time?" Yunyan said nothing, and Yaoshan laughed hard. Yunyan said, "What is practicing among other types of beings?"***

***Yaoshan said, "I am tired today. Come back some other time."***

***Yunyan said, "I have come back specifically for this matter."***

***Yaoshan said, "Go away for now." Yunyan left.***

***Outside the abbot's room, Daowu, overhearing Yaoshan's not confirming Yunyan's understanding, bit his finger to bleeding without noticing. He went back to Yunyan and said, "Junior brother, what did you say to the master [Yaoshan]? How was it?"***

***Yunyan said, "The master did not answer me." Daowu bowed.***

***Later, when Daowu and Yunyan were with Yaoshan, Yaoshan said, "Where wisdom does not reach, you prefer not to say. If you say it, horns will emerge."***

***Daowu thanked him and went away.***

***Yunyan finally asked Yaoshan, "Why did [my] senior brother Zhi [Daowu] not answer you?"***

***Yaoshan said, "I have a backache today. Daowu understands this matter. Go and ask him."***

***Yunyan went [to Daowu] and said, "Senior brother, why did you not answer the master?"***

***Daowu said, "I have a headache. Go and ask the master."***

***Later, before passing away, Yunyan sent his last words to Daowu. Daowu read them and said, "I did not know that Yunyan had it. I regret that I did not say it to him at that time. Even so, he was still an heir of Yaoshan."***

1. ***Where wisdom does not reach*** = in spirit, without wisdom derived from analysis of past experience, without judgment, test of time (past action, present deed, future consequences), or test of harmony. Spirit precedes manifestation; manifestation precedes observation; observation precedes analysis of observation; analysis of observation precedes wisdom. The 'path of being' is to be at one with all things, without judgment, be here now, be in the moment instead of dwelling in time, wisdom, karma and manifestation of things. Deeds committed in the past remain in the past; learn to accept things as they are without judgment, categorization, discrimination, choosing or designation.
2. ***Wisdom*** arise from analysis of perceptions, tested in the world of manifestation against gravity, electromagnetic field, chemical reactions and nuclear reaction, does it work or is it imaginary; tested by disease, competitions and pestilence and found to be enduring; tested by karma (reciprocity, do unto others as you want others do unto you) and found to be just; tested by harmony and found to be beautiful; tested by conservation of energy and conservation of resources. Strength and clarity of wisdom results from many lives in the world of manifestation; wisdom reappearing in future lives as 'spontaneous' enlightenment, instinct, innate wisdom and talent. The path of divinity is being in the world of manifestation, being in time, past, present and future, and act according to

conditions that would lead to justice, and in accordance to natural law. Wisdom is revealed through action; wise application of acquired knowledge

3. **'I would rather not speak'** = words, description of observations. Poetry is not river; poetry is description; river is.
4. **Nanquan said "Bright and clear; but if you speak of it, horns will emerge"**; agreed, that is so, it is best not to speak and use words to describe interpretation of sensory perceptions of observations of nature; poetry is not river.

#### **CASE 58: Shishuang's "Nothing Is Concealed"**

**Zen master Qingzhu of Mount Shishuang [Puhui] was once asked by a monastic, "It is heard three thousand li away that Shishuang has 'this not turning back to look.'"**

**Shishuang said, "Right."**

**The monastic said, "Myriad things are evident. Do you reflect or not reflect on this?"**

**Shishuang said, "If I answer, it won't startle the assembly."**

**The monastic said, "Not startling the assembly does not accommodate the myriad things. How is it when there is no reflection?"**

**Shishuang said, "Nothing is concealed in the entire universe."**

1. **This not turning back to look:** to accept things as they are without reflecting on the meaning of things; turning back to look is to reflect on things that were observed.
2. **Not startling the assembly does not accommodate the myriad of things:** 'not startling' and 'not accommodate' is a double negative, cancelling to yield: startling the assembly accommodates the myriad of things. = life if full of surprises. **Not startling the assembly** is bland, average, conforming to the norm, and regression to the mean; which does not yield significant progress in the evolution of life for the **myriad of things**.
3. **How is it when there is no reflection?** Ambiguous, when there is no thing, no object for light to bounce off and return a visual image; or there is no thought, consideration, pondering or musing about the meaning of things.
4. **Nothing is concealed in the entire universe:** 'No thing', spirit is concealed in the universe, in the manifestation of things.

#### **CASE 60: Xuansha's Seamless Stupa**

**When Xuansha traveled with Xuefeng, Xuefeng pointed at the ground in front of him and said, "This piece of field may be suited for building a seamless stupa."**

**Xuansha said, "How high should it be?"**

**Xuefeng looked up and down.**

**Xuansha said, "It's not that you don't have a good influence on humans and devas. It's just that you have not even dreamed of the Buddha's affirmation of the attainment of Buddhahood on Vulture Peak."**

**Xuefeng said, "How would you say it?"**

**Xuansha said, "Seven or eight feet."**

1. **Stupa: memorial tower often containing sacred relics or texts; symbol of Buddha ancestors.**
2. **seamless stupa,** stupa made without seams, in the spiritual realm
3. **How high should it be?** Height, referring to physical height of stupa or to the physical structure plus intended usage, social impact and environmental impact.

4. **Looked up and down:** height referring to seamless stupa, including physical structure, future students that attain enlightenment therein, birds that perch on roof, travelers that find shade and respite, and benefits to the nearby community.
5. **Seven or eight feet:** physical height of stupa; reductionist thinking, without reference to purpose, usage, presence or impact of stupa on future students, the environment and community.

#### **CASE 65: Guizong's "One-Flavor Zen"**

**A monastic bid farewell to Guizong Zhichang.**

**Guizong said to him, "Where are you going?"**

**The monastic said, "I am going to many places to study the five-flavor Zen."**

**Guizong said, "There is one-flavor Zen in my place."**

**The monastic said, "What is your one-flavor Zen?" Guizong hit him.**

1. **To study the five-flavor Zen:** the monk sought information, data, knowledge, wisdom, fact, and teachings. To study, to examine someone else's interpretations of sensory data about nature.
2. **There is one-flavor Zen in my place... Guizong hit him:** hit = verb, the one-flavor Zen is the Zen of being, hit, tread, walk,... verb. Unity of one-flavor that is not separate into 5-flavor

#### **CASE 71: Cuiwei's "Meaning"**

**Zen master Lingzun of Mount Qingping [Faxi] asked his teacher, Cuiwei, "What is the exact meaning of the Bodhidharma's coming from India?"**

**Cuiwei said, "I will tell you when no one is around."**

**After a while Qingping said, "There is no one now. Please tell me, Master."**

**Cuiwei got down from the meditation platform and took Qingping into a bamboo yard.**

**Qingping said again, "There is no one here. Please tell me."**

**Pointing to bamboo, Cuiwei said, "This bamboo is tall just as it is. That bamboo is short just as it is."**

1. **The exact meaning of the Bodhidharma's coming from India:** to be; now, at one with all things.
2. **When no one is around:** when you are at the state of oneness, instead of separated into distinct numbers, one, two, three... 'No one is around' is when there is unity, without separation of self from others, without identifying Cuiwei separate from Qingping.
3. The path of being, to be at one with all things; tall things are tall and short things are short. There are 2 other different paths, the path of salvation and the path of divinity.

#### **CASE 73: Mimoyan's Pitchfork**

**Priest Mimoyan of Mount Wutai always held a two-pronged pitchfork. When he saw a monastic coming, he would hold up the pitchfork and say, "What kind of demon has made you leave the household? What kind of demon has caused you to wander? If you can say it, you will be killed with this pitchfork. If you can't say it, you will be killed with this pitchfork. Say it now, quickly!"**

1. **Say it** with words = nouns; description of observations using sensory perceptions about nature. If you use word, interpretations of sensory data and speak, you miss the Way. Talk and more talk obscure the Way.
2. **say it** with action = verb

#### **CASE 75: Yantou's "Sit Still"**

**Zen master Quanhua of Yantou [Qingyan] was once asked by a monastic, "What can I do when the three worlds all arise together?"**

**Yantou said, "Sit still."**

**The monastic said, "I don't understand what you mean, Master."**

**Yantou said, "Bring Mount Lu here and I will tell you."**

1. **Three worlds. The desire world, which includes the six realms; the form world of those who are free from desire; and the formless world of those who have attained the highest freedom in meditation.**
2. **Sit still:** stillness, silence, be here now, be at one with the world. The three worlds are already here; see it, be at one with all things in the world.
3. **Bring Mount Lu here and I will tell you:** = if you are at one with Mount Lu, then you would be able to 'bring' Mount Lu with you; you would already know and I need not tell you.

#### **CASE 76: "No-Mind Is the Way"**

**[Guishan] Dagui was once asked by a monastic, "What is the Way?"**

**Dagui said, "No-mind is the Way."**

**The monastic said, "I don't understand it."**

**Dagui said, "It's good to understand not-understanding." The monastic said, "What is not-understanding?"**

**Dagui said, "It's just that you are not anyone else."**

1. **No-mind is the Way**= not using mind to analyze sensory perceptions of the world. The Way is being at one with all things in the world (outside, in nature) instead of analysis of perception (inside the mind).
2. **Not-understanding** = do not use mind to 'understand' things; 'understanding' is inside the mind, not outside in nature.
3. **The Way** is for those who follow the path of being; not for those who follow the path of salvation or the path of divinity
4. **The monastic said, "What is not-understanding?" Dagui said, "It's just that you are not anyone else."** When you separated yourself from everyone else by being '**not anyone else**' then you are in the state of '**not-understanding**', you are not being at one with all things.

#### **CASE 78: Dongshan's "Where Is the Fault?"**

**Dongshan Liangjie once invited Head Monastic Tai to have fruit with him and asked, "There is something that holds the sky above and the ground beneath. It is as black as**

***lacquer. It is always in activity but cannot be received within activity. Tell me, where is the fault?"***

***The head monastic said, "The fault is activity."***

***Dongshan shouted and then had the attendant take the fruit away.***

1. Spirit ***holds the sky***. ***Hold*** is ambiguous: to own, support, bear, contain, restrain, refuse to give ground, maintain, unchanging...
2. ***Where is the fault?*** One fault is in separating sky from earth, spirit from matter and the compartmentalization of things using mind, thought and interpretation of sensory data. Another fault is using description of spirit instead of spirit; poetic description of river is not river. Nature is stuff out there in the world; perception, description and analysis are stuff in the mind.
3. ***The head monastic said, "The fault is activity"***. Nouns and verbs: the monastic identified verb or name of action as the fault, instead of nouns as the fault. The fault is description (of spirit); facts, information, data, knowledge, opinions, news, rules, laws = nouns. Downloading information, wisdom, knowledge, rules, laws and commandments from the mind of god does not add more wisdom to the mind of god; wisdom without activity is futile; activity without wisdom is dangerous.
4. ***Always in activity but cannot be received within activity***: Spirit is always active, but spirit is not understood by looking at the activity; instead, look at the intent that comes from the heart. The ***fault*** is to claim that container is the content. The head that contains ideas and experiences is not the idea or experience; the pillow that contains the head is not the head; a jar that contains water is not water; and jar does not contain itself, activity does not contain itself; activity is a manifestation of spirit but activity is not spirit. Russell's paradox: 'a universal set that contains all sets including this set': the fault is to claim the container (universal set) is also the content. The function 'to act', 'to contain' = verb; the container (pillow, head, jar, universal set) = noun; the fault is to mix verb with noun, to mix container with content, to mix activity with spirit.

#### ***CASE 80: Zhaozhou's Buddha***

***Once a monastic bid farewell to Zhaozhou. Zhaozhou said, "Where are you going?"***

***The monastic said, "I will visit various places to study the Buddhadharma."***

***Zhaozhou picked up his whisk and said, "Do not abide in a place where there is a buddha. Pass by quickly a place where there is no buddha. Upon meeting someone, do not misguide that person." The monastic said, "That being the case, I will stay here."***

***Zhaozhou said, "Pick up the willow blossoms. Pick up the willow blossoms."***

1. ***Zhaozhou picked up his whisk*** = whisk is used to hit and awaken students; other means to awaken students include shout, kick, shove, throw down the staff
2. ***Do not abide in a place where there is a buddha*** that dispenses teachings, rules, information, data, knowledge, opinion, customs, rituals.
3. ***Pick up the willow blossom*** = flowers of nature is everywhere if you can see them; flowers of nature are not found in books, sutras, scriptures, rules, information, data, knowledge

**CASE 81: Yunmen's "Everyone's Light"**

**Yunmen said to the assembly, "All people are in the midst of illumination. When you look at it, you don't see it; everything seems dark and dim. How is it being in the midst of illumination?"**

**No one in the assembly responded.**

**Yunmen answered for them, "Monastics' hall, buddha hall, kitchen, monastery gate." He also said, "A good thing does not compare with no thing."**

1. **All people are in the midst of illumination** = all people have spirit that illuminate their body, and all are participants in evolution.
2. **Monastics' hall, buddha hall, kitchen, monastery gate** = different stages of evolution, but all are part of evolution; halls, rooms and walls are different parts of the monastery
3. **A good thing does not compare with no thing** : 'no thing' = empty, not yet in manifestation, in the spirit, not in the world of things.

**CASE 84: Yunyan's "Not a Single Word"**

**One day Yunyan said to the assembly, "There is a child in this household. If you ask a question, there is nothing he can't answer."**

**Dongshan Liangjie then asked, "How large a library does he have?" Yunyan said, "Not a single word."**

**Dongshan said, "Then how come he is so learned?"**

**Yunyan said, "He does not sleep day or night."**

**Dongshan said, "If we ask him about the single matter, can we get a response?"**

**Yunyan said, "Although he can speak, he won't answer."**

1. Poetry is not river.
2. **There is a child in this household** = there is childlike innocence within you that you may access if you are still and quite.
3. **If you ask a question, there is nothing he can't answer**: a double negative, nothing and can't cancels = If you ask a question, he can answer with the still silent voice of intuition.
4. **Although he can speak, he won't answer** (using words and speech; but he may use action, gesture and motion to answer your questions) the answer is found by being at one with the still silent voice within.

**CASE 85: Shishuang's "A Single Hair Pierces Innumerable Holes"**

**Shishuang Chuyuan was once asked by Senior Monastic Quanming, "When does a single hair pierce innumerable holes?"**

**Shishuang said, "Ten thousand years later."**

**Quanming said, "What will happen ten thousand years later?"**

**Shishuang said, "It is you who will pass the examination and excel among people."**

**Later Quanming asked the same question of Zen master Hongyin of Jingshan [Faji].**

**Jingshan said, "You personally will have to shine your sandals and harvest the fruit."**

1. **'hair'** = thing; **'hole'** = absence of thing. Thing and no thing combine when you realize the unity of all things (**Ten thousand years later**). That realization is attained by walk, tread, work, shine, harvest, (verb) instead of contemplating on 'thing', 'no thing' (nouns).

2. ***You personally will have to shine your sandals and harvest the fruit*** individual karma and individual progress along the path of enlightenment.

### **CASE 89: Shishuang's "This Side and That Side"**

***One day, Shishuang Chuyuan said to his attendant monastic, "Daowu once said to a monastic, 'Do not discard that side to get to this side.' How do you understand this?"***

***The attendant monastic said, "It's the same as your understanding, Master."***

***Shishuang said, "What is my understanding?"***

***The attendant monastic walked from west to east and stood there. Shishuang said, "You have just discarded that side to get to this side."***

1. Monastic's understanding is activity, demonstration by walking instead of speech. If he walked in a circle one and a half times, he would have shown unity while traveling from west to east.

### **CASE 91: Huangbo's Single Staff**

***Huangbo told a monastic, "All the venerable ones in various places all over the country are on top of my staff."***

***The monastic bowed.***

***Later the monastic went to see Dashu and told him the story.***

***Dashu said, "Huangbo said so, but has he seen various places?"***

***The monastic went back to Huangbo and told him about it.***

***Huangbo said, "My words have already reached all over the country." Langye commented on this, "Dashu's response was like someone who seemed to have eyes but was really blind. Huangbo's single staff cannot be bitten and chewed by anyone in this country."***

1. ***staff*** = physical object or function of meditation staff
2. ***Dashu said, "Huangbo said so, but has he seen various places?"*** Dashu refer to staff as physical object, not meditation. Has he seen various places: places as physical location or state of mine

### **CASE 92: Teaching and Not Teaching**

***Sansheng said, "When I meet someone, I go away. When I go away, I don't guide him."***

***His dharma brother Cunjiang of Xinghua Monastery said, "When I meet someone, I don't go away. When I go away, I guide him."***

1. ***I*** : = the physical body, person, self-identity, name, social standing, or ego.
2. ***When I go away***: when self-identity go away; to be anonymous, without rank or social status
3. ***'I don't guide him'***, the student guides him or herself
4. ***When I go away, I guide him*** = self-identity leaves. The student is guided by the teaching and not the teacher.

**CASE 94: Yunju's "Place That Cannot Be Contained"**

***Yunju was once asked by a monastic, "When you are born, why don't you know you exist?"***

***Yunju said, "Existence is not the same as being born."***

***The monastic said, "How about the time when you are not yet born?"***

***Yunju said, "You never die."***

***The monastic said, "When you are not yet born, where are you?"***

***Yunju said, "Such a place cannot be contained."***

1. ***You are born:*** you as physical body, or you as spirit that is born and enters the physical realm of manifestation.
2. ***When you are born, why don't you know you exist*** (-ed in previous lives)? The purpose of life on earth is for spirit to acquire experience, act with wisdom, and contribute to evolutionary progress of the spirit at the individual, community, national and planetary level. Knowledge of past lives is not necessary to advancement of spirit in the present life. However, experiences from past lives manifest as wisdom, instinct, talent, and intuition.
3. ***Existence is not the same as being born:*** the container is not the content; the physical body is the container of spirit but body is not spirit; a jar contains water but jar is not water; a pillow contains the head but pillow is not the head. Past lives contain experiences from the past; in this life, be here now, be in the moment, live this life in the present. Contribute to your present life by being in this life instead of trying to remember the past. 'Is', existence is spirit; being born is this life on earth.

\* [The True Dharma Eye](#) Zen Master Dogen's Three Hundred Koans. Translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and John Daido Looi, Shambhala, Boston & London 2011