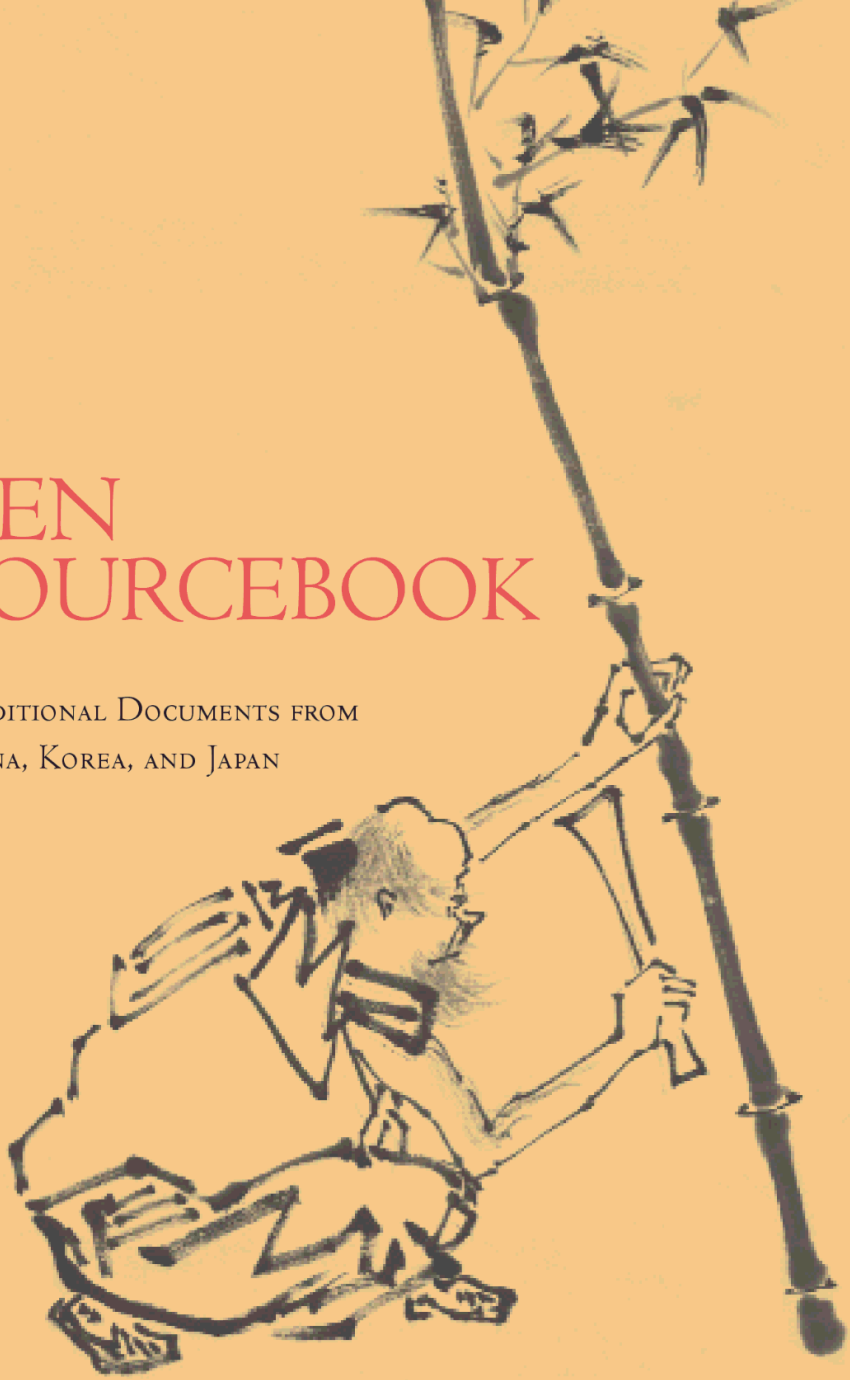
ZEN SOURCEBOOK

Traditional Documents from China, Korea, and Japan



Edited by
Stephen Addiss, with Stanley Lombardo and Judith Roitman

Introduction by Paula Arai

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1

The *Heart Sutra* and the *Kanzeon Sutra* (complete)

Serving as a prelude to the specifically Zen teachings that follow, two fundamental Buddhist chants present some of the background that informs what is called Ch'an *in China,* Son *in Korea, and* Zen *in Japan.*

The Heart Sutra *is arguably the fundamental text of East Asian Buddhism. It has been enormously influential, and it is chanted as part of daily practice in virtually all Zen temples. It was long thought to have been a section or an abbreviation of the 600-volume Sanskrit* Perfection of Wisdom Sutra. *A recent study by Jan Nattier suggests that the* Heart Sutra *was actually composed in China, probably in the seventh century, and later translated into Sanskrit. Although the center section was indeed taken from the* Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, *the beginning and end seem to have been originally written in Chinese, leading to a genuine Sanskrit mantra at the close. This text may have been originally intended for chanting as a scripture, rather than composed as a sutra per se, but known as the* "Heart Sutra" *it has become a major inspiration for many Buddhist sects.*

Since the Heart Sutra *is a text of great power, readers are best served by experiencing it directly. Therefore we will avoid most of the massive scholarship and commentary that has arisen around this text over the past fourteen hundred years and provide only a few brief notes for basic orientation. The original title is:* Maha prajna paramita hridaya sutra. *Word by word, this says: "great wisdom perfection heart sutra." Unpacking the syntax, it means: "the heart of the great perfection of wisdom."*

One of the significant features that characterizes Mahayana Buddhism is the idea of Bodhisattvas, enlightened beings who have resolved to stay on earth until all sentient beings are saved. Avalokitesvara (Kwan-yin *or* Guanyin *in Chinese,* Kwan Se Um *in Korean, and* Kannon *or* Kanzeon *in Japanese) is the Bodhisattva of Compassion.* Sariputra, *to whom the teaching is directed, was foremost among the Buddha's disciples in understanding* abhidharma, *the main stream of early Buddhist philosophy.*

Beginning with form and ending with awakening, the long list of categories that are negated in the Heart Sutra *largely come from* abhidharma.

They include the six components of perception (mind is also considered a sense organ) and an abbreviated list of the twelve links in the chain of codependence, all of which are contained in the five skandhas, *often translated as elements, aggregates, or constituents of human existence.*

Although they are philosophically complex, the skandhas *can be approached through experience. Walking through a garden* (form), *you notice something red* (sensation), *see that it's a flower* (perception), *and reach out to pluck it or decide to leave it for others to enjoy* (volition). *Your overall awareness of yourself in this situation is the fifth* skandha (consciousness). *These then are the five elements of existence:* form, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness.

The Heart Sutra *also deals with the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism: life entails suffering, which is caused by our cravings, anger, and ignorance, yet these can be released, by methods that include meditation. But what then is the focus of meditation? Early Buddhism emphasized impermanence as the fundamental nature of all things; in response the* Heart Sutra *proclaims the ultimate characteristic to be emptiness* (sunyata). *This is not nihilism—emptiness is not nothingness—and Zen Buddhism emphasizes that an experiential understanding of* sunyata *can lead to awakening.*

The *Maha Prajna Paramita Hrdaya* Heart Sutra

Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of all-seeing and all-hearing, practicing deep *prajna paramita,* perceives the five *skandhas* in their self-nature to be empty.

O Sariputra, form is emptiness, emptiness is form; form is nothing but emptiness, emptiness is nothing but form; that which is form is emptiness, and that which is emptiness is form. The same is true for sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness.

O Sariputra, all things are by nature empty. They are not born, they are not extinguished; they are not tainted, they are not pure; they do not increase, they do not decrease. Within emptiness there is no form, and therefore no sensation, perception, volition, or consciousness; no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no form, sound, scent, taste, touch, or thought.

It extends from no vision to no discernment, from no ignorance to no end to ignorance, and from no old age and death to no extinction of old age and death. There is no suffering, origination, annihilation, or path; there is no cognition, no attainment, and no realization.

Because there is no attainment in the mind of the Bodhisattva who dwells in *prajna paramita* there are no obstacles and therefore no fear or delusion. Nirvana is attained: all Buddhas of the past, present, and future, through *prajna paramita,* reach the highest all-embracing enlightenment.

Therefore know that *prajna paramita* holds the great Mantra, the Mantra of great clarity, the unequaled Mantra that allays all pain through truth without falsehood. This is the Mantra proclaimed in *prajna paramita,* saying:

Gate gate paragate parasamgate
bodhi svaha
Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond,
Awake! All hail!

—Translation by Stephen Addiss
with thanks to Stanley Lombardo

The *Kanzeon Sutra* in Ten Lines

Zen is rooted in Mahayana Buddhism—Hakuin talks of "the Zen meditation of Mahayana Buddhism" in his Song of Meditation *(see Chapter 24)—and these roots are most evident in the texts chanted in most Zen monasteries, Zen temples, and Zen centers around the world. The four great vows of the Mahayana school, homage to the line of ancestors stretching back to the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, and invocations of* Avalokitesvara *(usually under the names of more female forms and often called* Kanzeon*) pervade Zen practice.*

Here we give a brief example of a chant focused on Avalokitesvara*, the* Kanzeon Sutra *in ten lines. Originating in China (no one knows exactly when, but most probably over a thousand years ago), it was championed by Hakuin and is ubiquitous in Japanese Rinzai practice; it also is chanted in*

some Sōtō sect temples. In its ten lines it conflates Kanzeon; *homage to Buddha,* Dharma (*doctrine*), *and* sangha (*congregation); meditation instruction; and difficult philosophical points.*

The compactness of the Chinese text leads inevitably to a wide variation in translations into English, and we provide notes not only to justify this translation but also to signal some of the difficulties inherent in translating Buddhist, and especially Zen, texts.

"At one" is a translation of namu, *which is ordinarily a devotional term.*

The third and fourth lines are about direct and indirect cause (for example, a cigarette butt would be a direct cause of a fire, while the dryness of the vegetation would be an indirect cause), but the word for indirect cause is also associated with notions of affinity and closeness, and that is the approach taken here.

The sixth line is a fairly common Mahayana inversion of terms from early Buddhism (eternal *instead of* impermanent, joyous *instead of* suffering, existing *instead of* absence of self, *and* pure *instead of* impure). *The third word literally is "self" but in many translations is transformed into "selfless." In effect, this line is another way of contradicting what the* Heart Sutra *also contradicts through its lengthy string of negations.*

In the last two lines, thoughts arise in mind and then turn out to be just this mind. This can be taken both as instructions useful in meditation and as a point about the absolute and the relative, similar to that which is made in the Sandōkai *(see Chapter 5). The word for "mind" here does not distinguish between individual mind and universal mind.*

Since the text is so short, we also include the Sino-Japanese, which is traditionally chanted on one note to the steady beat of a drum (in the shape of a large fish). Nearly every syllable gets its own beat, with the exception of the words underlined, which are two syllables to the beat. The sutra is always repeated without stopping, frequently nine times but often much more.

Kanzeon,
At one with Buddha,
Caused by Buddha,
Close to Buddha
And to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,
Eternal, joyous, existing, pure.
Morning thoughts are Kanzeon;
Evening thoughts are Kanzeon;
Thoughts, thoughts arise in mind;
All these thoughts are just this mind.

Kanzeon
Namu butsu
Yo butsu u in
Yo butsu u en
Buppo so en
Jo raku ga jo
Cho nen Kanzeon
Bo nen Kanzeon
Nen nen ju shin ki
Nen nen fu ri shin.

—Translation by Stanley Lombardo

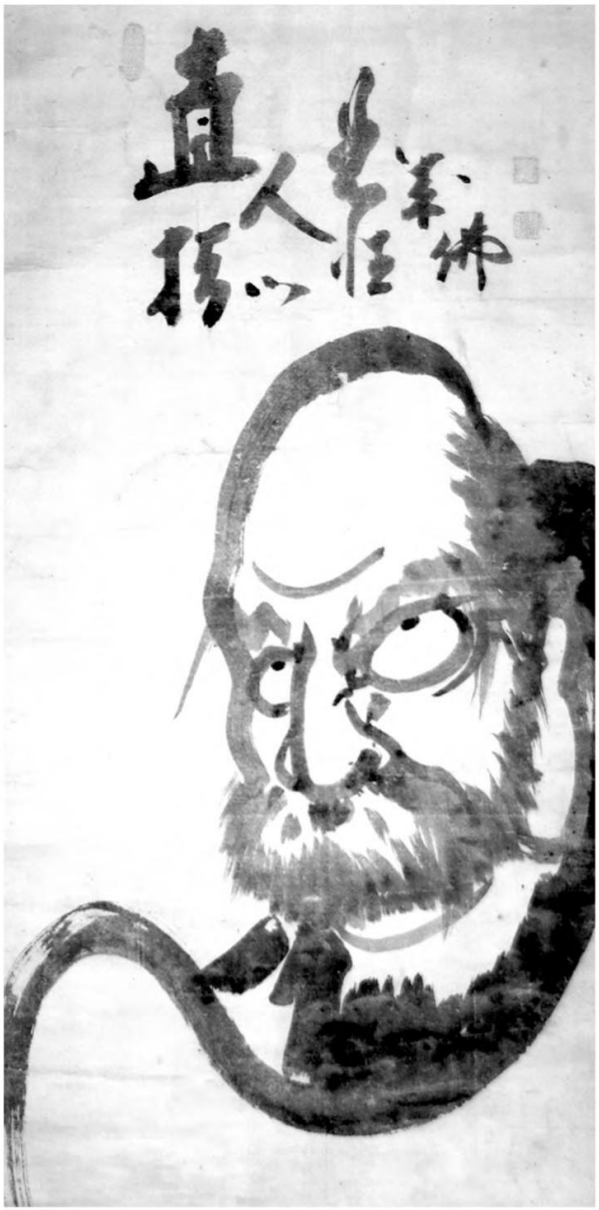

Figure 1. Hakuin Ekaku (1684–1768), *Bodhidharma*

Pointing directly to the human mind,
See your own nature and become Buddha.

2

Bodhidharma (died c. 532)

The Two Paths (complete)

The semi-legendary figure Bodhidharma (Japanese: Daruma) is considered both the twenty-eighth generation from the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, and the founder of East Asian Zen. He is therefore the First Zen Patriarch, and later Masters count their generations from him. Because accounts of Bodhidharma's life and teachings were generally written some time after his life, they are historically questionable; a few scholars have even wondered if he existed at all. Nevertheless, Bodhidharma has been of supreme importance in the Zen tradition and is the subject most often depicted in Zen painting, where he represents meditation itself.

According to later accounts, Bodhidharma was the third son of a monarch from South India; he became a Buddhist monk, and traveled to southern China sometime after the year 500 C.E. He was welcomed by the Emperor Wu-ti of the Liang Dynasty, who told him of the many good works he had done, such
as building temples. But when the Emperor asked how much merit he had acquired, Bodhidharma said "None."

> "What is the first principle of sacred truth?"
> "Vast emptiness, nothing sacred."
> "Who then is facing me?"
> "Don't know."

The Emperor was perplexed, and Bodhidharma departed northward to cross the Yangtze River (supposedly on a reed but more likely on a reed raft), and meditated in front of a wall near the Shao-lin temple for nine years, his famous "wall-gazing" of extraordinary meditation. At this point a Chinese monk named Hui-k'o asked for his guidance, but Bodhidharma was so intent on meditation that he did not notice until the monk cut off one of his arms to show his serious intent. This decisive action is seen as a metaphor for the commitment needed to study Zen. The story of Bodhidharma's subsequent teaching to Hui-k'o became Case Forty-One of the Wu-men-kuan *(Japanese:*

Mumonkan; *see Chapter 12), a collection of Zen anecdotes and encounters that are given as meditation questions to monks in training.*

Although probably dating to a later century, Bodhidharma's most famous teaching is regarded as the essential statement on Zen, with the understanding that in Chinese and Japanese, the character here translated as "mind" also means "heart" and could be translated either way.

> Without relying on words and writings,
> A special transmission outside the scriptures;
> Pointing directly to the human mind,
> See your own nature and become Buddha.

A story of Bodhidharma's understanding of his four leading followers, although recorded several hundred years later, tells us more about his teaching.

> After nine years of teaching, Bodhidharma wished to return to the West [India] and asked his pupils what they had attained from his teaching. Tao-fu said, "In my understanding, the truth neither holds onto words and writings nor is separate from them, yet they can help to realize the Way." The Master replied, "You have attained my skin."
>
> Next the nun Tsung-chih said, "In my understanding, the truth is like a fortunate glimpse of the Eastern Paradise of Akshobya; it can be seen one time and not again." The Master replied, "You have attained my flesh."
>
> Tao-yu then said, "The four elements are originally empty, and the five aspects of personality are nonexistent. In my understanding, there is no teaching to be grasped." The Master replied, "You have attained my bones."
>
> Hui-k'o bowed respectfully and remained silent. The Master said, "You have attained my marrow."

Hui-k'o was then given the transmission as Second Patriarch, and East Asian Zen was firmly established as a continuing tradition.

Several short sermon texts are also attributed to Bodhidharma, one of which teaches two methods of Zen practice.

The Two Paths

Many paths enter the Way, but they do not go beyond two basic kinds. The first is entering through principle, and the second is through practice. To enter through principle means using teachings to awaken the essence and understanding that all beings have the same true nature, which does not shine clearly because it is covered with the dust of delusion. When you abandon the false to cherish the real and meditate in front of a wall, you will discover that there is no separation between self and other; ordinary people and sages are the same. Not bound by words, free from concepts and discriminations, you will be completely in accord with inner truth. This is called entering through principle.

To enter through practice means the four practices that include all others. What are these four? The first is making amends for injustices. The second is accepting worldly conditions. The third is not craving. The fourth is practicing the Dharma.

What is the practice of making amends for injustices? When struggling with difficulties, the person who cultivates the Way should think, "In countless past ages I have deserted the root and followed the branches through a multitude of existences, giving in to feelings of anger and hatred, creating limitless transgressions. Even if I lead a blameless life, the evil deeds of the past have ripened, so any sufferings I feel now are not to be blamed on gods or other humans." You should accept any difficulties that life brings without complaint, for the sutras say, "When you meet with adversity there is no need to be upset, because from a higher viewpoint the basic cause can be understood." If you can keep this attitude in mind, you will be in harmony with truth, and you can make the experience of adversity into practice to enter the Way. This is called making amends for injustice.

What is the practice of accepting worldly conditions? We sentient beings have no true selves but experience happiness and suffering depending upon conditions stemming from cause and effect. If I find fame and fortune, that is the outcome of deeds from the past—but when conditions change, they will disappear, so why be exultant? Gain and loss come from conditions, but Mind neither increases nor decreases. If you are not stirred by the winds of joy or sorrow, you are in silent accord with the Way. This is called accepting worldly conditions.

What is the practice of not craving? People in this world are always seeking one thing or another outside themselves, which is called craving. But those who are wise wake up and maintain the serenity of inner truth while their bodies change with the seasons and laws of causation. All things are empty, so there is nothing to seek and crave. The sutras tell us that seeking

leads to suffering, and happiness comes when we cease craving, so we can know that seeking nothing is the Way. This is called not craving.

Finally, what is practicing the Dharma? The Dharma teaches that all natures are inherently pure, and the truth of all manifestations is emptiness. There is no impurity, no attachment, no self, and no other. The sutras say, "In Dharma there are no sentient beings, because it is detached from any impurity of sentient beings; in Dharma there is no self, because it is free from any impurities of selfhood." When the wise understand this truth, they practice the Dharma. Since they have no desire to possess, they practice charity with their bodies, lives, and property without grudging, without partiality, and without attachment to giving. They merely benefit other sentient beings and follow the Way without grasping at forms. As with charity, they also practice the other virtues in order to eliminate delusions, but without being conscious of being virtuous. This is called practicing the Dharma.

—Translation by Stephen Addiss

3

Seng-ts'an (died 606)

Hsin-hsin-ming (*Trust in Mind,* complete)

Seng-ts'an (Japanese: Sōzan) was the Third Patriarch of Chinese Zen, having received transmission from Bodhidharma's successor, Hui-k'o. Seng-ts'an may have been suffering from leprosy when he met Hui-k'o, and later tradition records their moment of truth, which echoes Hui-k'o's famous encounter with Bodhidharma (see Chapter 12, Wu-men-kuan, *Case Forty-One), along these lines.*

> Seng Ts'an went to Hui-k'o and said, "My body is gripped by a fatal disease. Please, Master, wipe away my sins."
>
> Hui-k'o said: "Bring your sins out here, and I will wipe them away for you."
>
> Seng-ts'an sat for a while and then said, "When I look for my sins I cannot find them." Hui-k'o answered, "I have wiped away your sins."

Soon after Seng-ts'an received transmission, Buddhism was persecuted in China and he spent fifteen years wandering and hiding in the mountains. Out of all this hard training comes this poem—the first on record that is attributed to a Zen Master. In the year 582 he met Tao-hsin, who was to become his pupil and thereupon the Fourth Patriarch, and in this way the transmission of Zen continued.

The title Hsin-hsin-ming 信心銘 *has the literal meaning "Trust Mind Inscription." The character for the first* hsin *is composed of two parts* 信, *showing a man on the left standing by his words. The second* hsin *is the character for "heart-mind"* 心, *while* ming *is composed of "metal" and "name"* 銘 *and means "carving" or "inscription." Blending Taoist and Buddhist teachings of oneness, equality, suchness, and interpenetration, the* Hsin-hsin-ming *introduces us to a vast and meticulous world in which time and space no longer have their ordinary meanings and in which*

> Bright and empty,
> mind shines by itself.

The poem consists of 146 lines and differs from standard Chinese verse in that the lines are unrhymed. It also follows an archaic form of poetry with only four characters to each line instead of the usual five or seven, creating a terse, no-nonsense sense of movement.

The Great Way is not difficult:
Just don't pick and choose.
Cut off all likes and dislikes
And it is clear like space.

The slightest distinction
Splits heaven from earth.
To see the truth
Don't be for or against.

Likes and dislikes
Are the mind's disease.
If you miss the deep meaning,
It is useless to still your thoughts.

It is clear as vast space,
Nothing missing, nothing extra.
If you choose or reject,
You cannot see things as they are.

Outside, don't get tangled in things.
Inside, don't get lost in emptiness.
Be still and become One,
And confusion stops by itself.

Stop moving to become still,
And the stillness will move.
If you hold on to opposites,
You cannot understand One.

If you don't understand One,
This and that cannot function.
Denied, the world goes on.
Pursued, emptiness is lost.

The more you think and talk,
The more you lose the Way.
Cut off all thinking
And pass freely anywhere.

Return to the root and understand,
Chase outcomes and lose the source.
One clear moment within
Illumines the emptiness before you.

Emptiness changing into things
Is only our deluded view.
Do not seek the truth,
Only let go of your opinions.

Do not live in the world of opposites.
Be careful! Never go that way.
If you make right and wrong,
Your mind is lost in confusion.

Two comes from One,
But do not cling even to this One.
If one mind does not arise,
The ten thousand things are without fault.

No fault, no ten thousand things,
No arising, no mind.
No world, no one to see it,
No one to see it, no world.

This comes when that goes.
That arises when this sinks.
Understand both
As originally one emptiness.

In emptiness the two are the same,
And each holds the ten thousand things.
If you do not see great or small,
How can you prefer one to the other?

The Way is calm and wide,
Not easy, not difficult.
But small minds get lost.
Hurrying, they fall behind.

Clinging, they go too far,
Sure to take a wrong turn.
Just let it be! In the end,
Nothing goes, nothing stays.

Follow nature and find the Way,
Free, easy, and undisturbed.
Tied to your thoughts, you lose the truth,
Become heavy, dull, and unwell.

Not well, the mind is troubled,
So why hold or reject anything?
To ride the One Vehicle,
Do not despise the six senses.

Not despising the six senses
Is already enlightenment.
The wise do not act,
Fools bind themselves.

In true Dharma there is no this or that,
So why blindly chase desires?
Using mind to grasp mind
Is the original mistake.

Peaceful and troubled are only ideas.
Enlightenment has no likes or dislikes.
All opposites arise
From faulty views.

Illusions, flowers in the air—
Why try to grasp them?
Win, lose, right, wrong—
Put it all down!

If the eye never sleeps,
Dreams disappear by themselves.

If the mind makes no distinctions,
The ten thousand things are one essence.

See the deep and dark essence
And be free from entanglements.
See the ten thousand things as equal
And return to true nature.

Without any distinctions
There can be no comparisons.
Stop and there is no motion.
Move and there is no stillness.

Without motion or stillness,
How can a single thing exist?
In true nature
There are no goals or plans.

In the mind before thinking
No effort is made.
Doubts and worries disappear
And faith is restored.

Nothing is left behind,
Nothing stays with us.
Bright and empty,
The mind shines by itself.

In the mind without effort
Thinking cannot take root.
In the true Dharma world
There is no self or other.

To abide in this world
Just say "Not two."
"Not two" includes everything,
Excludes nothing.

Enlightened beings everywhere
All return to the Source.
Beyond time and space,
One moment is ten thousand years.

Nothing here, nothing there,
But the universe is always before you.
Infinitely small is infinitely large:
No boundaries, no differences.

Infinitely large is infinitely small:
Measurements do not matter here.
What is, is what is not.
What is not, is what is.

Where it is not like this,
Do not bother staying.
One is all,
All is one.

When you see things like this,
You are already complete.
Trust and Mind are not two.
Not-two is Trust in Mind.

The Way is beyond all words:
Not past, not future, not present.

—Translation by Stanley Lombardo

4

Hui-neng (638–713)

Autobiography (complete)

from the *Platform Sutra*

One of the most important Masters in the history of Zen was Hui-neng, an uneducated layman who did not become a monk until many years after he was given transmission to become the Sixth Patriarch. Hui-neng's teachings have been so admired that they have been entitled the Platform Sutra *(also known as the* Altar Sutra*), although strictly speaking a sutra is supposed to represent the words of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni.*

The first section of the Platform Sutra *consists of the record of a public talk that includes the autobiography of Hui-neng; most of what is known about him comes from this record. As history, it may well have been altered and expanded over the centuries, an occurrence that seems to have happened with several Zen documents; some sections have been used as polemical arguments within Zen traditions, the beginning of longstanding disagreements about the best approaches to Zen practice. As teachings, several sections of this text have become especially celebrated, such as the two poems that were composed in response to a request from the Fifth Patriarch, the significant question that Hui-neng gave to the monk in a mountain pass, and the story of the flag blowing in the wind.*

One of the many interesting points in this account is how Hui-neng faced prejudice as a "barbarian" layman from the south. Some interpreters have assumed this to mean that he was an aborigine or otherwise racially different from the northern Chinese, since the text suggests he was visually distinct from other followers of the Fifth Patriarch. The danger posed by prejudice within the large community at the monastery was serious enough to make even the Fifth Patriarch cautious. Yet Hui-neng's background has an important positive meaning as well. If an uneducated layman from a poor family within a subsidiary ethnic group could achieve enlightenment and become the Sixth Patriarch, then seeing one's self-nature is possible for anyone. In this sense Zen is completely democratic.

This narrative emphasizes sudden enlightenment, which was to be a feature of "southern school" Zen while the "northern tradition" emphasized gradual attainment, although this distinction is not always clear-cut. In addition, the text stresses the importance of Dharma transmission from one Master to the next, even while making clear that there is nothing to be transmitted beyond symbols such as the robe. One of the effective paradoxes in Zen is that transmission is vital, and yet one must find self-nature, the essence of mind, for oneself.

How much of the text can be certainly ascribed to Hui-neng himself is unsure, but there is so much unique material included that it suggests a certain amount of authenticity. At present, there are two primary versions of this text; the earlier one is shorter and possibly more reliable, but the later version contains several phrases that have become important in Zen teaching, so this is the text given here. As an important source of teachings (Dharma), the Platform Sutra *remains an extremely significant document for early Zen.*

When the Sixth Patriarch arrived at the Pao Lin Monastery, Magistrate Wei of the Shao-chou district, along with local officials, went to the monastery to ask him to deliver public talks on Buddhism in the Ta Fan temple for the benefit of all who would attend. When the Patriarch took his place, the audience included the magistrate, thirty other officials, more than thirty Confucian scholars, and more than a thousand Buddhist monks and nuns, Taoists, and laypeople. They all bowed, wishing to hear the essentials of Buddha-Dharma, so the Patriarch gave this talk.

Good friends, our enlightened self-nature is pure and clean, and it can be used to understand and attain Buddhahood. Let me tell you something about my own life and how I came to understand the Dharma of the Zen school. My father came from Fan-yang, but he was dismissed from his governmental post and banished to become a commoner in Hsin-chou. Unfortunately for me, he died early, so my mother and I lived in poverty and distress. We moved to Nan-hai where I sold firewood to help support us.

One day a customer bought wood from me and requested me to deliver it to his shop. He received the wood and paid me, but as I left the shop I saw a man reciting a Buddhist sutra. When I heard the words, my mind immediately awakened. I asked him what was the name of the sutra, and he said it was the *Diamond Sutra,* so I asked where he came from and why he chanted these words. He replied, "I came from Eastern Meditation Monastery in Huang-mei District of the province of Ch'i, where the Master is the Fifth Patriarch [of Zen]; he has more than a thousand followers. The

Master tells his disciples to read the *Diamond Sutra* in order to reach their own essence of mind and attain Buddhahood."

It must be due to some good cause from one of my former lives that a customer for my firewood gave me ten silver *taels* for the upkeep of my mother and advised me to go seek out the Fifth Patriarch. After I made arrangements for my mother, I left and thirty days later reached Huang-mei, where I paid reverence to the Patriarch. He asked me where I came from and what I wanted, so I replied that I had come as a commoner from afar to pay homage to him, and that I asked for nothing but Buddhahood.

The Patriarch said, "You are a barbarian from the south; how could you expect to become a Buddha?"

I replied, "There are people in the south and people in the north, but their Buddha-nature is the same. As a barbarian I may be different from you physically, but what difference could there be in our Buddha-nature?"

The Patriarch was ready to speak further, but he stopped because of the presence of other people around him and ordered me to join other followers at work. I replied, "May I say that wisdom arises in my mind, and since I do not stray from my essence of mind, I am in a field of blessings; I don't know what work you would have me do."

The Patriarch said, "This barbarian has a sharp mind! Go to the backyard and speak no more," so I went to the back of the monastery and worked, splitting firewood and pounding rice.

More than eight months later, the Patriarch came to see me and said, "I know your understanding is very deep, and I have been considering what to do. I have not spoken to you in case some evil men might do you harm—do you understand?"

"Yes," I replied, "and to avoid having people take notice of me, I haven't come to the main hall."

One day the Patriarch summoned all of his followers and said to them, "The question of birth and death is a most important matter. All day long, you seek out only your own blessings instead of freeing yourself from the sea of death and rebirth. If your self-nature is deluded, blessings will not save you. Go seek for wisdom in your own minds, and then write me a stanza; whoever understands the essence of mind will be given my robe and teachings to become the Sixth Patriarch. Go quickly and don't linger, for thinking and reasoning won't help at all in perceiving your self-nature. The person who can understand will perceive it even if engaged in battle."

After receiving these instructions, the followers withdrew and said to each other, "There's no use in us concentrating our minds to write the verse for his Holiness, since the head monk Shen-hsiu is our instructor and is certain to be the winner. It will only be a waste of effort on our parts to try to write the stanza; let's just follow Shen-hsiu."

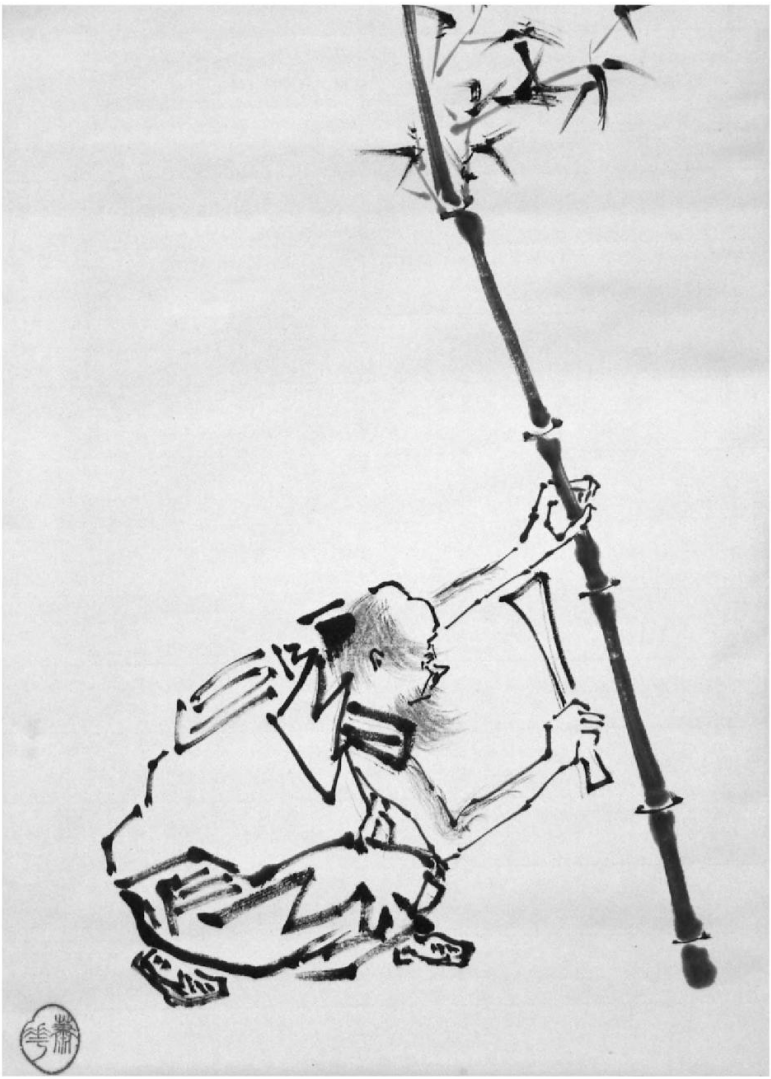

Figure 2. Stephen Addiss after Liang K'ai, *The Sixth Patriarch Chopping Bamboo*

Shen-hsiu himself thought, "Since the others would not submit a stanza because I am their instructor, I must certainly compose a verse, for if I don't, how can I know if my understanding is deep or shallow? If my purpose is wisdom, my motive is pure. If I desire to become the next Patriarch, however, my mind is worldly, because I am trying to usurp the rank of a holy person. Yet if I don't submit a stanza, I'll never achieve the Dharma—how difficult, how difficult!"

In front of the Patriarch's hallway there were three corridors that were to be painted by the court artist Lu Chen with images from the *Lankavatara Sutra.* These would depict the transformations of the assembly and the genealogy of patriarchs for veneration by the public.

Shen-hsiu composed a stanza and tried several times to submit it to the Patriarch, but every time he approached the door, his mind became so perturbed that he broke into a sweat. He simply did not have the courage to present it, despite trying thirteen times over the course of four days. Finally he thought to himself, "It would be better to write it on the corridor wall and let the Patriarch see it. If he approves, I will come and bow to him as the writer of the verse, but if he doesn't approve, I will realize that I will have wasted many years here receiving the reverence of others—how could I then practice the Dharma?"

At midnight Shen-hsiu went secretly with his lamp to write his stanza on the south corridor wall, posting the following verse to present his understanding.

> The body is the tree of enlightenment,
> The mind is like a bright mirror's stand;
> Time after time polish it diligently
> So that no dust can collect.

After writing this, Shen-hsiu returned to his room without anyone seeing him. But again he worried, "When the Patriarch sees my verse tomorrow, if he is pleased I will be ready for the Dharma, but if he says it is unfit, it will mean that I must have bad karma from previously lives so I am not qualified—I cannot guess what he will say!" In this manner he could neither sleep nor sit at ease with himself.

The Patriarch already knew that Shen-hsiu had not entered the door to perceiving his own nature. The next morning, he sent for Lu Chen and went with him to the south corridor, where he unexpectedly found the stanza. He said to the artist, "I'm sorry to have caused you this long trip, since there's no need for you to paint the wall now; as the *[Diamond] Sutra* says, 'All forms are transient and unreal.' We will leave this verse here so that people can study and recite it. If they put its teaching into practice, evil realms can be

avoided and great merit will be the result." Then he ordered incense to be lit, and for all his followers to pay homage and recite the stanza so that they might come to realize the essence of mind. After they had recited it, they all said, "Excellent!"

At midnight, the Patriarch sent for Shen-hsiu to come to the hall, and asked if he had written the stanza. Shen-hsiu replied, "Yes; I do not dare seek to be Patriarch, but I hope that you will tell me if my verse shows even a grain of wisdom."

The Patriarch said, "Your stanza demonstrates that you have not yet perceived your own nature; you have reached only the doorway and have not yet entered. To seek for complete enlightenment with such a mind cannot succeed, for to achieve supreme enlightenment you must instantly understand your own fundamental nature and essence of mind. This fundamental self-nature has no birth or death, and at every moment you must realize the essence of mind. Once this suchness is known, you will be free from all delusions. Suchness is absolute reality, and when it is perceived, you are in a state of enlightenment. Why don't you go and take a few more days to think it over, and then submit another stanza; if this verse shows that you have entered the gate of enlightenment, I will transmit to you the robe and the Dharma."

Shen-hsiu bowed to the Patriarch and withdrew. For several days he tried his best to write another stanza, but could not because his mind was uneasy and agitated as though in a nightmare; he found no comfort in walking or sitting.

Two days later, a young attendant was passing the room where I was pounding rice, and he chanted the stanza by Shen-hsiu. As soon as I heard it, I knew that the person who had composed it had not perceived his own nature. Even though I had not been taught about it at this time, I already understood the main idea, so I asked the attendant, "Whose verse are you chanting?"

He replied, "You barbarian, don't you know about it? The Patriarch told his disciples that the question of birth and death is a most important matter, and since he was ready to transmit the robe and Dharma to a successor, he ordered his followers to compose a stanza and submit it to him. He said that whoever understood the essence of mind would become the Sixth Patriarch. Our head monk Shen-hsiu wrote this verse on formlessness on the wall of the south corridor and the Patriarch told us to recite it, saying that if we put its teaching into practice, evil realms could be avoided and great merit would be the result."

I told the attendant that I wished also to recite the stanza so that I might gain merit in a future life. I added that I had been pounding rice for eight

months but had never been to the main hall, and asked him to show me the stanza so that I might pay homage.

The attendant took me to the corridor, and I asked that the verse be read to me, since I could not read characters. A low-ranking official from Chiang-chou named Chang Jih-yung, who happened to be there, read it aloud to me, and I said, "I have a stanza too. Would you write it down for me?"

The official exclaimed, "You have also composed a verse? How extraordinary!"

I replied, "If you wish to seek out enlightenment, don't despise a beginner, for the lowest rank of person may have wisdom that high-ranking people ignore. If you slight others, you commit a great sin."

The official said, "Dictate to me your stanza, and I will write it down for you. But if you acquire the Dharma, you must liberate me. Please don't forget."

My stanza was this:

> Enlightenment is not a tree,
> The bright mirror has no stand;
> Originally there is not one thing—
> What place could there be for dust?

[Note: In the earliest version of the text, the third line reads "Buddha-nature is always clean and pure," but the third line as given here has become celebrated in Zen.]

When the official wrote this, all the followers who were present were greatly surprised and filled with admiration. They said to each other, "How marvelous! Truly we cannot judge a man by his appearance. How could we have had a Bodhisattva working for us for so long without knowing it?"

Seeing that his followers were amazed, and worrying that jealous people would do me harm, the Patriarch wiped away the stanza with his slipper and expressed the opinion that the author of this verse also had not reached the essence of mind.

The next day the Patriarch came secretly to the room where I pounded rice with a stone tied around my waist [for extra weight on the foot-pedal]. He first asked, "Should not a seeker after the Dharma risk his life this way?" Then he continued, "Is the rice ready?"

"It has been ready for some time," I replied. "It is only waiting to be sieved."

He knocked the foot-pedal three times with his staff and left. I understood the Patriarch's meaning, so that night at the third watch I went to his

room. He used his robe as a screen so that no one could see us from outside, and explained the *Diamond Sutra* to me. When he came to the phrase "One should activate one's mind so it has no attachment," I was suddenly and completely enlightened, and understood that all things exist in self-nature.

I then exclaimed to the Patriarch, "Who would have thought that self-nature is intrinsically pure? Who would have thought that self-nature is free from birth and death? Who would have thought that self-nature is complete within itself? Who would have thought that self-nature is unchanging? Who would have thought that all things are manifestations of self-nature?"

Knowing that I had realized the essence of mind, the Patriarch said, "For anyone who doesn't know the essence of mind, there is no advantage in studying the Dharma, but anyone who does understand self-nature is a master, a teacher of gods and humans, and a Buddha."

In this way the Dharma was passed to me secretly at midnight, and the Patriarch transmitted to me the doctrine of sudden enlightenment as well as his robe and bowl. He told me, "You are now the Sixth Patriarch. Take care of yourself, save as many sentient beings as you can, and spread the teachings so they will not be lost in the future." He then gave me this stanza:

> Sentient beings sow their seeds
> And cause the earth to bear fruit and return to birth;
> Nonsentient beings have no seeds,
> And their empty self-nature has no rebirth.

The Patriarch also told me, "After the First Patriarch Bodhidharma came to China, people were not sure of the succession, so this robe was transmitted from one Patriarch to the next. As for the Dharma, it is transmitted from mind to mind, to be awakened by self-understanding. From ancient times, Buddhas have taught their followers and Patriarchs transmitted to their successors the realization of self-nature. However, the robe has now become a matter of dispute, and you should not pass it down. If you transmit it, your life will be in great danger. You must leave this monastery quickly before anyone can do you harm."

"Where should I go?"

"You can stop at Huai and then hide yourself at Hui."

Receiving the robe and bowl at midnight, I told the Patriarch that since I came from the south, I did not know the mountain paths, so I could not find my way to the river. He told me that he would accompany me, and took me to the courier's station at Chiu-chiang, where he ordered me into a boat. He then took up the oar and rowed, but I said, "Sir, it is only fitting for me to take the oar."

He replied, "No, it is appropriate for me to row you across."

I said, "While I was deluded, it would have been right for you to row for me, but after my enlightenment I am able to row myself across. I was born on the frontier and do not speak with correct pronunciation, but now that you have transmitted the Dharma to me, my own self-nature can ferry me to the other shore."

The Patriarch replied, "Just so, just so! From this moment, the meditation school will prosper through you. Three years after you leave, I will depart this world, so you should start your journey now and travel as fast as you can to the south. But do not teach the Dharma too soon, or it will be difficult to promote."

After bidding him farewell, I left and traveled to the south on foot; within two months, I reached the Ta-yü Mountains. At this point, I realized that several hundred men were following me with the purpose of robbing me of the robe and bowl of the Patriarch. Among them was a monk whose name was Hui-ming and whose family name was Ch'en. He was a man of fierce temper who had been a military commander, and since he was the most intent on catching up with me, he led the pack. When he was about to overtake me, I put down the robe and bowl on a rock and said, "The robe is nothing but a symbol—what point is there to taking it by force?" Then I hid myself nearby.

When Hui-ming came to the rock, he tried to pick up the robe and bowl, but could not move them. Then he shouted, "Lay brother, lay brother, I have come for the Dharma, not for the robe!"

I came out and sat cross-legged on the rock. Hui-ming bowed and said, "Lay brother, please teach the Dharma to me."

I replied, "Since you have come for the Dharma, first you must empty your mind of feelings so that it does not give rise to a single thought; then I will expound the Dharma." When he had done this for some time, I said, "When you are thinking of neither good nor evil, in that moment, what is your original face?"

Instantly Hui-ming was enlightened. He then asked me, "Beyond the esoteric sayings handed down by the Patriarchs from generation to generation, are there any further teachings?"

I replied, "What you have been taught is not esoteric; if you look inward, that which you call esoteric is inside you."

Hui-ming said, "Although I stayed at Huang-mei, I did not realize my original face. Thanks to your guidance, I now understand, just as someone drinking water knows personally if it is hot or cold. Lay brother, you are now my teacher."

I said, "If this be true, then we are both disciples of the Fifth Patriarch; take good care of yourself." When he asked where he now should go, I told him to travel to Yuan-chou and dwell at Meng-shan.

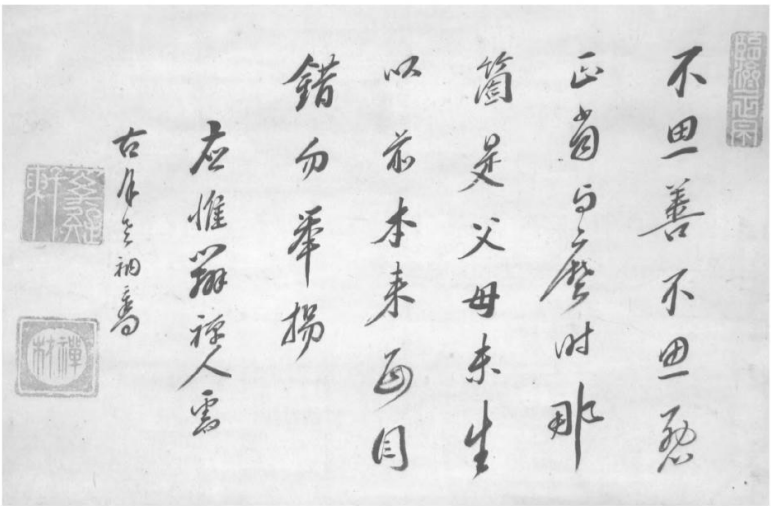

Figure 3. Kogetsu Zenzai (1667–1751), *Original Face*

Not thinking of good or evil,
Just at this moment, who is this?
Before your parents were born,
What was your original face?

After this meeting, I continued to Ts'ao-chi, still pursued by evil men. To avoid trouble, I took refuge in Szu-hui, where I stayed with a group of hunters for a period of fifteen years. I occasionally taught the Dharma to them, in accordance with their capabilities. They often asked me to watch their nets, but when I found a living creature I set it free. At mealtimes, I added vegetables to their pot where they cooked their meat, and when they questioned me, I told them I would only eat the vegetables.

One day I said to myself that it was time to end my seclusion and go preach the Dharma. Accordingly I went to the Fa Hsin temple in Kuang-chou, where the Dharma Master Yin-tsung was lecturing on the *Nirvana Sutra.* One day when the temple pennant was blowing in the wind, two monks were arguing. One claimed that the wind was moving, while the other insisted that it was the pennant that was moving, and they could not come to an agreement. I told them, "It's not the wind moving; it's not the flag moving; it is your minds that are moving."

Everyone was startled by my words, and Yin-tsung asked me to take the seat of honor so he could question me about various difficult points in the sutras. He then said, "Lay brother, you are not an ordinary man. I heard long ago that the person who inherited the robe and Dharma of the Fifth Patriarch would come to the south, and you must be that man."

To this I politely agreed. When he heard this, Yin-tsung bowed to me and asked me to show the robe and bowl to the community of monks. In addition, he asked what instructions the Fifth Patriarch had given me at the time of transmission. I replied that there were no special instructions; apart from looking into one's self-nature, there was no discussion of meditation and deliverance.

Yin-tsung asked, "Why did he not discuss meditation and deliverance?"

I replied, "Because that is a form of dualism, and there is no dualism in Buddha-Dharma."

"What then is the non-dual Buddha-Dharma?"

"The non-dual Dharma is the realization of self-nature. The *Nirvana Sutra,* which you have been teaching, recounts that the Bodhisattva Kao Kuei Te Wang asked the Buddha about those who commit the four major sins or the five perverse sins, or who have no urge for enlightenment—have they lost the roots of their Buddha-nature? The Buddha replied that there are two kinds of roots, permanent and impermanent. Since Buddha-nature is neither permanent nor impermanent, however, the roots can never be eradicated, and this is called non-duality. In addition, the five component parts of one's personality and the eighteen elements of consciousness are separate, but those who are enlightened know that they are not dual in their nature because Buddha-nature is not dual.

Yin-tsung was very pleased with my answers, and putting his palms together in the gesture of respect, he said, "My interpretations of the sutras are as worthless as potsherds, while yours are as valuable as gold." He then shaved my head as initiation into the order of monks and asked to become my pupil. From that time, under the tree of enlightenment, I taught the doctrines of the Tung-shan School of the Fourth and Fifth Patriarchs.

Since the Dharma was transmitted to me, I have gone through many difficult times, and my life has hung by a thread. Today, the honor of meeting all of you in this assembly—magistrates, officials, monks, nuns, Taoists, and laypeople—is due to our Buddhist merits and the planting of favorable roots in previous incarnations, giving us the opportunity to hear the doctrine of instant enlightenment and the acquisition of wisdom.

This teaching was handed down by former Patriarchs and does not come from my invention. Those who wish to understand the teaching should first purify their own minds, and after listening you should dismiss your doubts so that you will become like Patriarchs of the past.

After listening to this address, the people in the assembly were filled with joy; they bowed to the Patriarch and departed.

—Translation by Stephen Addiss

[Notes: The four major sins are killing, stealing, carnality, and lying; the five perverse sins are patricide, matricide, killing an enlightened being, shedding the blood of a Buddha, and destroying the harmony of the Buddhist assembly.]

5

Shih-t'ou (700–790)

Harmony of Difference and Equality (*Sandōkai,* complete)

Shih-t'ou Hsi-chien (Japanese: Sekitō) was born in Guangdong Province in southern China. When he was twelve years old he became a disciple of the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng. Upon Hui-neng's death two years later, Shih-t'ou practiced on his own for fifteen years and then studied with Ching-yuan, one of Hui-neng's main successors. He then established his practice in a hut on a rocky ledge (hence his name Shih-t'ou, literally "Rock Head") in Hunan ("South of the Lake"). He developed a relationship with his contemporary, the great Zen Master Ma-tsu (Japanese: Basō), each sending his students to study with the other. Ma-tsu's center was "West of the River," and it was said of Zen students of that period that if they did not practice south of the lake and west of the river, they could never achieve any real attainment.

Shih-t'ou took the title Sandōkai *(the Japanese form of the word has became traditional for the Chinese* Ts'an-t'ung-ch'i*) from an earlier Taoist work. His Chinese text is a poem consisting of forty-four lines, each five characters long, arranged in twenty-two couplets. The translation here was produced at the 1997 Sōtō School Liturgy Conference held at Green Gulch Farm in California. The translation of the title as* "The Harmony of Difference and Equality" *is a good index of the main theme of the poem. The opening lines allude to the doctrinal division between the northern and southern Zen schools, with their contrasting emphases on sudden and gradual enlightenment. Their differences are here resolved in the universality of the Way and Buddha's fundamental teaching. The poem goes on to suggest the resolution of other dichotomies that arise for the Zen student, and ends with a memorable exhortation to practice. Dōgen tells us that Shih-t'ou's own solid and continuous practice of seated meditation gave rise to a vigorous tradition of Zen. Shih-t'ou's poem was no less influential, since Tung-shan's Five Ranks (stages of enlightenment) derive from the* Sandōkai, *and the poem became a fundamental part of the Sōtō School's practice. It is still chanted daily in Sōtō monasteries throughout the world.*

The mind of the great sage of India
is intimately transmitted from west to east.

While human faculties are sharp or dull,
the Way has no northern or southern ancestors.

The spiritual source shines clear in the light;
the branching streams flow on in the dark.

Grasping at things is surely delusion,
according with sameness is still not enlightenment.

All the objects of the senses
transpose and do not transpose.

Transposing, they are linked together;
not transposing, each keeps its place.

Sights vary in quality and form;
sounds differ as pleasing or harsh.

Darkness merges refined and common words;
brightness distinguishes clear and murky phrases.

The four elements return to their natures,
just as a child turns to its mother.

Fire heats, wind moves,
water wets, earth is solid.

Eye and sights, ear and sounds,
nose and smells, tongue and tastes;

Thus for each and every thing,
according to the roots, the leaves spread forth.

From *Branching Streams Flow in the Darkness: Zen Talks on the* Sandokai, by Shunryu Suzuki; edited by Mel Weitsman and Michael Wenger (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Trunk and branches share the essence;
revered and common, each has its speech.

In the light there is darkness,
but don't take it as darkness;

In the dark there is light,
but don't see it as light.

Light and dark oppose one another
like the front and back foot in walking.

Each of the myriad things has its merit,
expressed according to function and place.

Existing phenomenally like box and cover joining;
according with principle like arrow points meeting.

Hearing the words, understand the meaning;
don't establish standards of your own.

Not understanding the Way before your eyes,
how do you know the path you walk?

Walking forward is not a matter of far or near,
but if you are confused, mountains and rivers block your way.

I respectfully urge you who study the mystery,
don't pass your days and nights in vain.

—Translation by the Sōtō School Liturgy Conference

6

Huang-po (died c. 850)

Transmission of Mind (excerpts)

Huang-po (Japanese: Ōbaku) lived two generations after Hui-neng, during an era in which a single generational line of Patriarchs no longer sufficed for the spread of Zen in China. His name as a monk was Hsi-yun, but like several other early Masters, he is better known for the name of the mountain where he taught, below Vulture Peak on Mount Huang Po.

Born in Fuchou, Huang-po was said to have had a large protruding forehead that was described as a "great pearl." He entered a monastery in Fuchou in his youth; he then traveled to practice at Mount T'ien-t'ai, and also studied with Nan-yang in the capital of Ch'ang-an. One significant anecdote remains from a visit Huang-po made to the Master Nan-ch'uan; when asked to recite an "Ode of the Ox-Herd," Huang-po simply replied, "I am my own teacher right here."

We can be grateful to the scholar-official P'ei Hsiu for recording the teachings of Huang-po, whom he so revered that he had his son become a novice to study with the Master. In the year 843, when P'ei was governing Wang-lin Prefecture, he built the Lung Hsing Monastery and invited Huang-po to come and teach. During this visit P'ei also stayed at the monastery and became Huang-po's pupil; after the Master left, P'ei recorded the teachings he had heard. Since P'ei was known as a good scholar, and because he gave the manuscript to two monks who were pupils of Huang-po to check, we can assume that these writings accurately represent the teachings of the Master. P'ei then published his manuscript in the year 858, a few years after the death of Huang-po. The first part of the text consists of short sermons and excerpts from sermons, while the second section represents further teachings as well as answers to questions that the Master was asked by his followers; we present excerpts from both sections.

According to P'ei Hsu's preface, Huang-po was in a direct line of spiritual lineage from Hui-neng and taught the doctrine of "one mind," in which mind and substance are both void. By describing the mind as "unborn," Huang-po predates Bankei (see Chapter 23) by nine hundred years, and by stressing that even the sutras are only temporary remedies, he gives precedence to actual

experience. But what is this experience? Huang-po makes clear that it is neither reverential nor intellectual; by his statement that even conceiving of a Buddha makes us obstructed by that Buddha, he urges us to "put mental activity to rest."

There are many important passages in the following text. For example, as a major Master who transmitted Hui-neng's "sudden enlightenment" tradition for later generations, Huang-po teaches that since "there's never been a single thing," we must enter the Way with "the suddenness of a knife-thrust." Huang-po refers to the historical Buddha as Tathagata ("thus come"), but he considers Buddha-nature as mind (the same character can also mean "heart").

Huang-po's most important pupil was Lin-chi, who tells the story of his interactions with Huang-po in the following section. Since the Lin-chi (Japanese: Rinzai) School survives as one of the most important Zen traditions, we can regard Huang-po as its spiritual ancestor, and, indeed, his powerful and sharply focused teachings are still vital in the transmission of Zen training. In addition, the Chinese monks who emigrated to Japan in the mid-seventeenth century became a sect known in Japan as Ōbaku.

When a sudden flash of thought occurs in your mind and you recognize it for a dream or an illusion, then you can enter into the state reached by the Buddhas of the past—not that the Buddhas of the past really exist, or that the Buddhas of the future have not yet come into existence. Above all, have no longing to become a future Buddha; your sole concern should be, as thought succeeds thought, to avoid clinging to any of them.

If a Buddha arises, do not think of him as "enlightened" or "deluded," "good" or "evil." Hasten to rid yourself of any desire to cling to him. Cut him off in the twinkling of an eye! On no account seek to hold him fast, for a thousand locks could not stay him, nor a hundred thousand feet of rope bind him. This being so, valiantly strive to banish and annihilate him.

I will now make luminously clear how to set about being rid of that Buddha. Consider the sunlight. You may say it is near, yet if you follow it from world to world you will never catch it in your hands. Then you may describe it as far away and, lo, you will see it just before your eyes. Follow it and, behold, it escapes you; run from it and it follows you close. You can neither possess it nor have done with it. From this example you can understand how it is with the true Nature of all things and, henceforth, there will be no need to grieve or to worry about such things.

From *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po,* translated by John Blofeld (New York: Grove Press, 1958). Reprinted by permission of The Estate of John Blofeld and Grove/Atlantic, Inc.

Thus all the visible universe is the Buddha; so are all sounds; hold fast to one principle and all the others are identical. On seeing one thing, you see all. On perceiving any individual's mind, you are perceiving all Mind. Obtain a glimpse of one way and all ways are embraced in your vision, for there is nowhere at all which is devoid of the Way. When your glance falls upon a grain of dust, what you see is identical with all the vast world-systems with their great rivers and mighty hills. To gaze upon a drop of water is to behold the nature of all the waters of the universe. Moreover, in thus contemplating the totality of phenomena, you are contemplating the totality of Mind. All these phenomena are intrinsically void and yet this Mind with which they are identical is no mere nothingness. By this I mean that it does exist, but in a way too marvelous for us to comprehend. It is an existence which is no existence, a non-existence which is nevertheless existence.

The phenomenal universe and Nirvana, activity and motionless placidity —all are of one substance. By saying that they are all of one substance, we mean that their names and forms, their existence and non-existence, are void. The great world-systems, uncountable as Ganga's sands, are in truth comprised in the one boundless void. Then where can there be Buddhas who deliver or sentient beings to be delivered? When the true nature of all things that "exist" is an identical Thusness, how can such distinctions have any reality? To use the symbol of the closed fist: when it is opened, all beings—both gods and men—will perceive there is not a single thing inside. Therefore is it written, "There's never been a single thing; then where's the defiling dust to cling?" If "there's never been a single thing," past, present and future are meaningless. So those who seek the Way must enter it with the suddenness of a knife-thrust. Full understanding of this must come before they can enter.

Whatever Mind is, so also are phenomena—both are equally real and partake equally of the Dharma-Nature, which hangs in the void. He who receives an intuition of this truth has become a Buddha and attained to the Dharma. No listening, no knowing, no sound, no track, no trace—make yourselves thus and you will be scarcely less than neighbors of Bodhidharma!

Q: What is implied by "seeing into the real Nature"?

A: That Nature and your perception of it are one. You cannot use it to see something over and above itself. That Nature and your hearing of it are one. You cannot use it to hear something over and above itself. If you form a concept of the true nature of anything as being visible or audible, you allow a dharma of distinction to arise.

You people still conceive of Mind as existing or not existing, as pure or defiled, as something to be studied in the way that one studies a piece of

categorical knowledge, or as a concept—any of these definitions is sufficient to throw you back into the endless round of birth and death. The man who perceives things always wants to identify them, to get a hold on them. Those who use their minds like eyes in this way are sure to suppose that progress is a matter of stages. If you are that kind of person, you are as far from the truth as earth is far from heaven. Why this talk of "seeing into your own nature"?

If, as thought succeeds thought, you go on seeking for wisdom outside yourselves, then there is a continual process of thoughts arising, dying away and being succeeded by others.

The existence of things as separate entities and not as separate entities are both dualistic concepts. As Bodhidharma said: "There are separate entities and there are not, but at the same time they are neither the one nor the other, for relativity is transient." A man drinking water knows well enough if it is cold or warm. Whether you be walking or sitting, you must restrain all discriminatory thoughts from one moment to the next. If you do not, you will never escape the chain of rebirth.

Only when your minds cease dwelling upon anything whatsoever will you come to an understanding of the true way of Zen. I may express it thus—the way of the Buddhas flourishes in a mind utterly freed from conceptual thought processes, while discrimination between this and that gives birth to a legion of demons!

Q: But how can we prevent ourselves from falling into the error of making distinctions between this and that?

A: By realizing that, although you eat the whole day through, no single grain has passed your lips; and that a day's journey has not taken you a single step forward—also by uniformly abstaining from such notions as "self" and "other." Do not permit the events of your daily lives to bind you, but never withdraw yourselves from them. Only by acting thus can you earn the title of "A Liberated One."

The Master said to me: All the Buddhas and all sentient beings are nothing but the One Mind, beside which nothing exists. This Mind, which is without beginning, is unborn and indestructible. It is not green nor yellow, and has neither form nor appearance. It does not belong to the categories of things which exist or do not exist, nor can it be thought of in terms of new or old. It is neither long nor short, big nor small, for it transcends all limits, measures, names, traces and comparisons. It is that which you see before you—begin to reason about it and you at once fall into error. It is like the boundless void which cannot be fathomed or measured. The One Mind alone is the Buddha, and there is no distinction between the Buddha and sentient things but that sentient beings are attached to forms and so seek

externally for Buddhahood. By their very seeking they lose it, for that is using the Buddha to seek for the Buddha and using mind to grasp Mind. Even though they do their utmost for a full aeon, they will not be able to attain to it. They do not know that, if they put a stop to conceptual thought and forget their anxiety, the Buddha will appear before them, for this Mind is the Buddha and the Buddha is all living beings. It is not the less for being manifested in ordinary beings, nor is it greater for being manifested in the Buddhas.

Mind is like the void in which there is no confusion or evil, as when the sun wheels through it shining upon the four corners of the world. For, when the sun rises and illuminates the whole earth, the void gains not in brilliance; and, when the sun sets, the void does not darken. The phenomena of light and dark alternate with each other, but the nature of the void remains unchanged. So it is with the Mind of the Buddha and of sentient beings. If you look upon the Buddha as presenting a pure, bright or Enlightened appearance, or upon sentient beings as presenting a foul, dark or mortal-seeming appearance, these conceptions resulting from attachment to form will keep you from supreme knowledge, even after the passing of as many aeons as there are sands in the Ganges. There is only the One Mind and not a particle of anything else on which to lay hold, for this Mind is the Buddha. If you students of the Way do not awake to this Mind substance, you will overlay Mind with conceptual thought, you will seek the Buddha outside yourselves, and you will remain attached to forms, pious practices and so on, all of which are harmful and not at all the way to supreme knowledge.

This Mind is no mind of conceptual thought and it is completely detached from form. So Buddhas and sentient beings do not differ at all. If you can only rid yourselves of conceptual thought, you will have accomplished everything. But if you students of the Way do not rid yourselves of conceptual thought in a flash, even though you strive for aeon after aeon, you will never accomplish it.

The building up of good and evil both involve attachment to form. . . . Suppose a warrior, forgetting that he was already wearing his pearl on his forehead, were to seek for it elsewhere, he could travel the whole world without finding it. But if someone who knew what was wrong were to point it out to him, the warrior would immediately realize that the pearl had been there all the time. So, if you students of the Way are mistaken about your own real Mind, not recognizing that it is the Buddha, you will consequently look for him elsewhere, indulging in various achievements and practices and expecting to attain realization by such graduated practices. But, even after aeons of diligent searching, you will not be able to attain to the Way.

Our original Buddha-Nature is, in highest truth, devoid of any atom of objectivity. It is void, omnipresent, silent, pure; it is glorious and mysterious

peaceful joy—and that is all. Enter deeply into it by awaking to it yourself. That which is before you is it, in all its fullness, utterly complete. There is naught beside. Even if you go through all the stages of a Bodhisattva's progress towards Buddhahood, one by one; when at last, in a single flash, you attain to full realization, you will only be realizing the Buddha-Nature which has been with you all the time; and by all the foregoing stages you will have added to it nothing at all.

This pure Mind, the source of everything, shines forever and on all with the brilliance of its own perfection. But the people of the world do not awake to it, regarding only that which sees, hears, feels and knows as mind. Blinded by their own sight, hearing, feeling and knowing, they do not perceive the spiritual brilliance of the source-substance. If they would only eliminate all conceptual thought in a flash, that source-substance would manifest itself like the sun ascending through the void and illuminating the whole universe without hindrance or bounds. Therefore, if you students of the Way seek to progress through seeing, hearing, feeling and knowing, when you are deprived of your perceptions, your way to Mind will be cut off and you will find nowhere to enter. Only realize that, though real Mind is expressed in these perceptions, it neither forms part of them nor is separate from them. You should not start reasoning from these perceptions, nor allow them to give rise to conceptual thought; yet nor should you seek the One Mind apart from them or abandon them in your pursuit of the Dharma. Do not keep them nor abandon them nor dwell in them nor cleave to them. Above, below and around you, all is spontaneously existing, for there is nowhere which is outside the Buddha-Mind.

Students of the Way should be sure that the four elements composing the body do not constitute the self; that the self is not an entity; and that it can be deduced from this that the body is neither self nor entity. Moreover, the five aggregates composing the mind (in the common sense) do not constitute either a self or an entity; hence, it can be deduced that the (so-called individual) mind is neither self nor entity. The six sense organs (including the brain) which, together with their six types of perception and the six kinds of objects of perception, constitute the sensory world, must be understood in the same way. Those eighteen aspects of sense are separately and together void. There is only Mind-Source, limitless in extent and of absolute purity.

Ordinary people look to their surroundings, while followers of the Way look to Mind, but the true Dharma is to forget them both. The former is easy enough, the latter very difficult. Men are afraid to forget their minds, fearing to fall through the Void with nothing to stay their fall. They do not know that the Void is not really void, but the realm of the real Dharma. This spiritually enlightening nature is without beginning, as ancient as the Void,

subject neither to birth nor to destruction, neither existing nor not existing, neither impure nor pure, neither clamorous nor silent, neither old nor young, occupying no space, having neither inside nor outside, size nor form, color nor sound. It cannot be looked for or sought, comprehended by wisdom or knowledge, explained in words, contacted materially or reached by meritorious achievement.

On the first day of the ninth moon, the Master said to me: From the time when the Great Master Bodhidharma arrived in China, he spoke only of the One Mind and transmitted only the one Dharma. He used the Buddha to transmit the Buddha, never speaking of any other Buddha. He used the Dharma to transmit the Dharma, never speaking of any other Dharma. That Dharma was the wordless Dharma, and that Buddha was the intangible Buddha, since they were in fact that Pure Mind which is the source of all things. This is the only truth; all else is false. . . . Nothing is born, nothing is destroyed. Away with your dualism, your likes and dislikes. Every single thing is just the One Mind. When you have perceived this, you will have mounted the Chariot of the Buddhas.

If an ordinary man, when he is about to die, could only see the five elements of consciousness as void; the four physical elements as not constituting an "I"; the real Mind as formless and neither coming nor going; his nature as something neither commencing at his birth nor perishing at his death, but as whole and motionless in its very depths; his Mind and environmental objects as one—if he could really accomplish this, he would receive Enlightenment in a flash. He would no longer be entangled by the Triple World; he would be a World-Transcendor. He would be without even the faintest tendency towards rebirth. If he should behold the glorious sight of all the Buddhas coming to welcome him, surrounded by every kind of gorgeous manifestation, he would feel no desire to approach them. If he should behold all sorts of horrific forms surrounding him, he would experience no terror. He would just be himself, oblivious of conceptual thought and one with the Absolute. He would have attained the state of unconditioned being. This, then, is the fundamental principle.

People are often hindered by environmental phenomena from perceiving Mind, and by individual events from perceiving underlying principles; so they often try to escape from environmental phenomena in order to still their minds, or to obscure events in order to retain their grasp of principles. They do not realize that this is merely to obscure phenomena with Mind, events with principles. Just let your minds become void and environmental phenomena will void themselves; let principles cease to stir and events will cease stirring of themselves. Many people are afraid to empty their minds lest they may plunge into the Void. They do not know that their own Mind *is* the void.

The canonical teachings of the Three Vehicles are just remedies for temporary needs. They were taught to meet such needs and so are of temporary value and differ one from another. If only this could be understood, there would be no more doubts about it. Above all it is essential not to select some particular teaching suited to a certain occasion, and, being impressed by its forming part of the written canon, regard it as an immutable concept. Why so? Because in truth there is no unalterable Dharma which the Tathagata could have preached. People of our sect would never argue that there could be such a thing. We just know how to put all mental activity to rest and thus achieve tranquility. We certainly do not begin by thinking things out and end up in perplexity.

Q: What is the Buddha?

A: Mind is the Buddha, while the cessation of conceptual thought is the Way. Once you stop arousing concepts and thinking in terms of existence and non-existence, long and short, other and self, active and passive, and suchlike, you will find that your Mind is intrinsically the Buddha, that the Buddha is intrinsically Mind, and that Mind resembles a void. Every day, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down, and in all your speech, remain detached from everything within the sphere of phenomena. Whether you speak or merely blink an eye, let it be done with complete dispassion. This is not something which you can accomplish without effort, but when you reach the point of clinging to nothing whatever, you will be acting as the Buddhas act.

If you would spend all your time—walking, standing, sitting or lying down—learning to halt the concept-forming activities of your own mind, you could be sure of ultimately attaining the goal. Since your strength is insufficient, you might not be able to transcend *samsara* [the cycle of rebirths] by a single leap; but, after five or ten years, you would surely have made a good beginning and be able to make further progress spontaneously.

Anything possessing any signs is illusory. It is by perceiving that all signs are no signs that you perceive the Tathagata. "Buddha" and "sentient beings" are both your own false conceptions. It is because you do not know real Mind that you delude yourselves with such objective concepts. If you will conceive of a Buddha, you will be obstructed by that Buddha! And when you conceive of sentient beings, you will be obstructed by those beings. All such dualistic concepts as "ignorant" and "Enlightened," "pure" and "impure," are obstructions.

Q: If our own Mind is the Buddha, how did Bodhidharma transmit his doctrine when he came from India?

A: When he came from India, he transmitted only Mind-Buddha. He just pointed to the truth that the minds of all of you have from the very first

been identical with the Buddha, and in no way separate from each other. That is why we call him our Patriarch. Whoever has an instant understanding of this truth suddenly transcends the whole hierarchy of saints and adepts belonging to any of the Three Vehicles. You have always been one with the Buddha, so do not pretend you can attain to this oneness by various practices.

Discuss it as you may, how can you even hope to approach the truth through words? Nor can it be perceived either subjectively or objectively. So full understanding can come to you only through an inexpressible mystery. The approach to it is called the Gateway of the Stillness Beyond All Activity. If you wish to understand, know that a sudden comprehension comes when the mind has been purged of all the clutter of conceptual and discriminatory thought-activity. Those who seek the truth by means of intellect and learning only get further and further away from it.

Were you now to practice keeping your minds motionless at all times, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying; concentrating entirely upon the goal of no thought-creation, no duality, no reliance on others and no attachments; just allowing all things to take their course the whole day long, as though you were too ill to bother; unknown to the world; innocent of any urge to be known or unknown to others; with your minds like blocks of stone that mend no holes—then all the Dharmas would penetrate your understanding through and through. In a little while you would find yourselves firmly unattached. Thus, for the first time in your lives, you would discover your reactions to phenomena decreasing and, ultimately, you would pass beyond the Triple World; and people would say that a Buddha had appeared in the world. Pure and passionless knowledge implies putting an end to the ceaseless flow of thoughts and images, for in that way you stop creating the karma that leads to rebirth—whether as gods or men or as sufferers in hell.

The Void is fundamentally without spatial dimensions, passions, activities, delusions or right understanding. You must clearly understand that in it there are no things, no men and no Buddhas; for this Void contains not the smallest hairsbreadth of anything that can be viewed spatially; it depends on nothing and is attached to nothing. It is all-pervading, spotless beauty; it is the self-existent and uncreated Absolute. A perception, sudden as blinking, that subject and object are one, will lead to a deeply mysterious wordless understanding; and by this understanding will you awake to the truth of Zen.

—Translation by John Blofeld

7

Lin-chi (died 866)

Lin-chi Record (excerpts)

Lin-chi (Japanese: Rinzai) was one of the most famous Chinese Masters, and his Rinzai tradition of sudden enlightenment is still a major force in East Asian Zen. He was born, probably between 810 and 815, in the western part of Shantung, just south of the Yellow River. It is not known when he became a monk, probably in his teens as was customary at the time. According to his own records, after he had spent some time studying the sutras and monastic regulations, he grew dissatisfied and turned to Zen. Following a period of initial training, he went on pilgrimage to find a Master, settling at Mount Huang Po in Kiangsi. The story that he relates of his enlightenment is a classic, and after this dramatic confrontation Lin-chi became a member of the fourth generation of succession from Hui-neng. He then traveled through China visiting Zen centers before settling in Chen-chou, in northern China, where he lived in a small riverside temple named Lin-chi-yuan, from which his most famous Zen name derives.

Lin-chi's teachings, like the man, are direct, powerful, and straightforward. One of his most celebrated remarks, about killing the Buddha, may seem extremely iconoclastic, but it follows directly upon his teacher Huang-po's comment about not attaching oneself to anything, even the Buddha. Instead, Lin-chi stresses that no extra effort has to be made, for this effort itself can become an attachment. How then should one proceed in one's training, if striving itself may be a mistake? Here is the crux of the matter, and many of Lin-chi's teachings are geared toward helping his followers come to their own understanding that they must let go—even after taking a step forward—and break through their illusions, including those brought on by words. Because of his varied and dynamic teaching methods, Lin-chi has often been portrayed in Zen paintings, sometimes shouting, sometimes holding a stick, and sometimes glowering with a clenched fist.

The following excerpts are taken from talks to his monk followers and from the record of his pilgrimages, collectively known as the Lin-chi Record. *In these excerpts, we can see the teacher in several guises, asking questions of his*

Figure 4. Hakuin Ekaku (1684–1768), *Portrait of Lin-chi* (detail)

followers, prodding them, encouraging them, and challenging them, all in the effort to support their own quests to find their Buddha-nature.

When first Lin-chi was a monk in Huang-po's assembly, he was simple and direct in his actions. The head monk admired him, saying, "Even though he is still young, he's different from the other monks." He then asked, "How long have you been here?"

Lin-chi answered, "Three years."

"Have you been for an interview yet?"

"No, I've never asked the Master questions—I don't even know what to ask."

"Then why don't you go ask the Reverend Abbot, 'What is the basic meaning of Buddhism?' "

Lin-chi therefore went to ask, but before he had even completed the question, Huang-po hit him. When Lin-chi returned from the interview, the head monk asked, "How did it go?" Lin-chi replied, "Before I had finished my question, the Reverend hit me, but I don't know why."

The head monk said, "Just go and ask him again."

So Lin-chi went back, and once more Huang-po hit him. In total, Lin-chi asked three times, and was hit three times. So he said to the head monk, "At your kind instruction, I have been able to question the Reverend three times, and I have been struck three times. I fear that I am obstructed by my past karma from understanding the Master's profound meaning, so I think I'd better leave this monastery for awhile."

The head monk replied, "If you are going away, be sure to take your leave of the Master." Lin-chi then bowed and withdrew. The head monk went to Huang-po, saying, "The young monk who came to question you is a man of the Dharma, and I hope that when he comes to take his leave, you will find a way to help him. What is planted now can in the future become a great tree that will shade the people of the world in coolness."

When Lin-chi came to say goodbye, Huang-po told him, "You should go nowhere but to Ta-yu's place by the river in Ka-an; he will be sure to explain everything to you."

When Lin-chi arrived there, Ta-yu asked, "Where have you come from?"

Lin-chi replied, "I've just been at Huang-po's monastery."

"What did Huang-po tell you?"

"Three times I asked him about the essence of Buddhism, and three times he hit me—but I don't know if I did anything wrong or not."

Ta-yu said, "Huang-po, like a kindly old grandmother, was wearing himself out on your behalf, and yet you come here to ask if you did something wrong or not?"

Figure 5. Gesshū Sōko (1618–1696)
Nothing Much

"There's nothing much to Huang-po's Buddhism after all."

Hearing these words, Lin-chi attained a great enlightenment and exclaimed, "There's nothing much to Huang-po's Buddhism after all!"

Ta-yu grabbed the young monk and said, "You little bed-wetting devil! You were asking if you had done anything wrong or not, and now you are claiming there's not much to Huang-po's Buddhism—what did you just see? Speak quickly, speak quickly!"

Lin-chi punched Ta-yu three times in the side with his fist, so Ta-yu let go of him and said, "Huang-po is your teacher; this is no business of mine."

Lin-chi then took his leave of Ta-yu and returned to Huang-po, who commented, "This young fellow keeps coming and going, coming and going. When will he ever stop?"

Lin-chi replied, "It's all due to you being a kindly old grandmother." When he had finished his formal greetings, he stood in attendance. Huang-po asked him, "Where have you been?"

"At your Reverend's guidance, I went to see Ta-yu."

"What did he say to you?"

When Lin-chi explained what had happened, Huang-po said, "If I could grab that rascal, I'd give him a beating."

Lin-chi replied, "No need to say what you'd like to do; you can take this right now," and gave Huang-po a good punch.

"You're a madman," exclaimed Huang-po, "returning here to pull the whiskers of the tiger!"

Lin-chi gave a shout.

Huang-po called out, "Attendant, take this madman out of here and into the monks' quarters."

Later Wei-shan told this story to Yang-shan and asked, "Did Lin-chi get his enlightenment from Ta-yu or Huang-po?"

Yang-shan replied, "He not only rode on the head of the tiger, but he also pulled his tail."

•

Lin-chi taught, "Monks, don't be afraid of giving up your bodies and sacrificing your lives for the sake of Buddhism. Twenty years ago when I was at Huang-po's place, I asked him about the essence of Buddhism three times, and three times he was kind enough to hit me with his stick. But it was as though he had touched me lightly with a branch of mugwort. Remembering this, I would like the favor of the stick again—is there anyone who can give me a good smack?"

One of the monks stepped forward and said, "I can do it!"

Lin-chi held out his stick to him, but as the monk was getting ready to grasp it, Lin-chi whacked him.

•

Lin-chi took his place at the high seat of the hall and said, "One person on the top of a solitary peak has no path to come down; another at a busy crossroads cannot go forward or back. Which one is ahead, and which one lags behind?"

•

Lin-chi ascended the hall and said, "One person is forever traveling but never leaves his home; another has left his house but is not on the way. Which one is worthy to receive the offerings of mortals and gods?"

•

Lin-chi asked his followers, "Do you want to know Buddhas and Patriarchs? They are standing before me listening to this lecture. You don't have confidence in yourselves, so you run around searching. But even if you find something, it will be nothing but words and phrases, not the living spirit of the Patriarchs.

"Followers of the Way, in my understanding we are no different from Shakyamuni. In everything you do each day, is there anything you are missing?

"Followers of the Way, if you want to be the same as Buddha and the Patriarchs, then don't seek outside yourself. The nondiscriminating light of your mind at this instant becomes the essence-body of the Buddha inside you. The nondiscriminating light at this instant becomes the bliss-body of the Buddha inside you. The nondiscriminating light at this instant becomes the corporeal-body of the Buddha inside you. These three bodies are nothing other than you, the person who is listening to me explain the Dharma. But you can only come to this vision when you cease searching for anything outside yourself.

"Followers of the Way, simply follow circumstances and fulfill your karma. When it's time to put on your robe, put it on; when you need to travel, walk onward; when you wish to sit down, just sit; and never have a single thought of entering Buddhahood.

"Followers of the Way, Buddhism requires no special efforts. You have only to lead your everyday life without seeking anything more—piss and shit, get dressed, eat your rice, and lie down when you are tired.

> "Fools may laugh at me,
> But the wise understand."

•

"In my view, there is no Buddha, no sentient being, no past, and no present. Realization is immediate, needing no time, no practice, no enlightenment,

no gain, and no loss. There is no other teaching but this. Were there a special Dharma, I would say it must be a phantom and a dream. This is all that I teach.

"Followers of the Way, the true person knows there is nothing that needs doing, while others lacking inner confidence run around ceaselessly trying to find something; it's like throwing away your own head and then going to look for it."

•

"If you want to live or die, to go or stay as freely as taking off or putting on your clothes, then you should know that each person listening to my talk is without form or characteristics, without root or trunk, and has no dwelling place, yet is as lively as a fish splashing in the water. You are responding to all that happens naturally, yet there is no place where these responses happen. Therefore the more you search, the more this person eludes you, and the more you hunt, the farther away this person will be. This is what I call the mystery."

•

"Whatever comes along, don't let yourself be taken in. If you have a moment of doubt, the demon will enter your mind. Even Bodhisattvas, if they give way to doubt, are assailed by the demon of birth-and-death. Just put a stop to such thoughts, and never seek outside yourself. When something appears before you, shine your inner light upon it; have confidence in what is operating within you—everything else is empty."

•

"Followers of the Way, don't be deluded! Everything in this or any other world is without intrinsic nature, or any nature that manifests itself. They are just empty, as is the word "empty" that describes them. If you regard any name as reality, you are making a big mistake. Even if anything exists, it is in the act of changing.

"A Buddha can enter the world of form without being deceived by form, can enter the world of sound without being deceived by sound, can enter the world of scent without being deceived by scent, can enter the world of taste without being deceived by taste, can enter the world of touch without being deceived by touch, and can enter the world of thought without being deceived by thought. Since these six things—form, sound, scent, taste, touch, and thought—are all empty of fixed characteristics, they cannot imprison the follower of the way, who does not depend on anything.

"Followers of the Way, if you want to understand the Dharma, do not be fooled by others. Whether you turn inward or outward, whatever you encounter, kill it! If you meet a Buddha, kill the Buddha; if you meet a Patriarch,

kill the Patriarch; if you meet an enlightened being, kill the enlightened being; if you meet your parents, kill your parents; if you meet your relatives, kill your relatives. Only then will you find emancipation, and by not clinging to anything, you will be free wherever you go.

"Followers of the Way, students come here from every direction, and when guest and host have exchanged greetings, the new student will test out the teacher with a question, throwing out some phrase as if to say, 'Can you explain this?' If you are a teacher and understood that this is just a device, you grab it and throw it into a deep hole. The student then calms down and asks for instruction. The teacher seizes this also and throws it away. The student will now exclaim, 'What surpassing wisdom! What a wonderful teacher!' The teacher responds, 'You can't tell good from bad.'

"Or the teacher may take something and play with it in front of a student. But the student sees through this device and becomes the host, not being fooled by humbug. The teacher then reveals half of himself, and the student gives a great shout. The teacher now enters into the world of verbal differentiations to see if the student gets confused. But the student responds, 'This old baldy can't tell good from bad himself,' whereupon the teacher sighs with admiration, 'Here is a true follower of the way!' "

•

Someone asked, "What was the purpose of Bodhidharma coming from the west?"

Lin-chi replied, "If he had a purpose, he couldn't have saved even himself."

"If there was no purpose, how did the Second Patriarch attain the Dharma?"

"Attaining is not attaining."

"If he did not attain, what do you mean by 'not attaining'?"

Lin-chi answered, "It seems that you can't stop your mind from running around and seeking something. That's why the Patriarch said, 'Such wonderful fellows, using their heads to search for their heads!' Instead of looking outside, you should turn your inner light upon yourself, and you will realize that your body and mind are not different from those of Patriarchs and Buddhas, and there's nothing special that you need to do. This is called attaining the Dharma."

•

"Followers of the Way, don't just accept blindly the things I tell you. Why not? Because they have no proof, they're just pictures drawn in the empty sky.

"My old teacher once said 'open your mouth, already a mistake.' So you'll just have to see for yourselves—that's all there is, or there's no end to talking."

•

One day Governor Wang came to visit Lin-chi, and when they passed the Meditation Hall, the governor asked, "Do the monks at this monastery read the sutras?"

Lin-chi replied, "No, they don't read sutras."

"In that case do they learn meditation?"

"No, they don't learn meditation either."

Governor Wang then asked, "If they don't read sutras or learn meditation, what do they do?"

"They are all in training to become Patriarchs and Buddhas."

The governor said, "Gold dust may be valuable, but in the eye it can cause blindness."

Lin-chi replied, "And to think I used to believe that you were just an ordinary person!"

—Translation by Stephen Addiss

8

The P'ang Family: Layman P'ang (740–808), Mrs. P'ang (n.d.), and P'ang Ling-chao (d. 808)

Anecdotes and Poems (excerpts)

One of the main complaints against Buddhism by Confucianists in China was that it was anti-family. Since monastics left their parents and homes, they were regarded by some critics as not fulfilling their obligations under Confucian doctrines. Buddhists replied that the parents were often proud to have one or more of their children become monastics who could pray for their families and hold services for them after their deaths. There was also a certain amount of prestige in having a member of the family in the Buddhist clergy, at least during times when the religion was being favored by the government. Nevertheless, the criticism was hard to refute completely.

Another concern has been the place of women in Buddhism. Along with many anecdotes about wise women who frequently got the better of traveling monks in their interactions, in the stories of the P'ang family there is strong evidence of Zen going beyond any question of gender. For these reasons, the story of the P'angs has been very important for Buddhists, especially followers of Zen, because not only was P'ang a layperson who had become enlightened, but his wife and daughter were at least his equals, as some of the anecdotes about them make clear.

The son of a minor Confucian official in Hunan, P'ang studied with two of the great Zen Masters of his time, Shih-t'ou (Japanese: Sekitō; see Chapter 5) and Ma-tsu (Japanese: Basō). In middle age, P'ang gave his house away and threw his possessions into a river. Thereupon he divided his time, sometimes settling in one place for a year or two with his wife, son, and daughter, and sometimes traveling on pilgrimage with his daughter. His Zen names P'ang Yun ("lofty interior") and Tao-hsuan ("way of mystery") give some sense of his achievements during his life of poverty and simplicity.

The text, generally called The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang, *is made up not only of lectures and Dharma discourses, as had been common with early Zen Masters, but also of Zen encounters and stories from the P'ang*

family's later years, as well as a few poems. The Imperial Prefect Yu Ti (died 818), who had been a vigorous opponent of Buddhism, became an admirer, friend, and pupil of Layman P'ang after a dramatic incident during which the Prefect threatened him with death and P'ang showed no fear. It was Yu Ti who compiled the Recorded Sayings, *probably soon after Layman P'ang's death, adding some brief biographical details. The following anecdotes and poems give an idea of the spontaneous nature of the P'ang family's Zen encounters and show how Zen was a free and active force in the lives of the enlightened.*

Introduction

The layman P'ang Yun of Hsiangchou, whose nickname was Tao-hsuan, was a resident of Heng-yang prefecture in Hengchou. His family had been Confucianists for generations. While yet a youth he became aware of the defiling passions and aspired to seek the absolute truth.

Dialogues with Shih-t'ou

At the beginning of the Chen-yuan era [786–804] of T'ang, the Layman visited Zen Master Shih-t'ou. He asked the Master: "Who is the man who doesn't accompany the ten thousand dharmas?"

Shih-t'ou covered the Layman's mouth with his hand. In a flash he realized!

One day Shih-t'ou said to the Layman: "Since seeing me, what have your daily activities been?"

"When you ask me about my daily activities, I can't open my mouth," the Layman replied. "Just because I know you are thus I now ask you," said Shih-t'ou. Whereupon the Layman offered this verse:

> My daily activities are not unusual,
> I'm just naturally in harmony with them.
> Grasping nothing, discarding nothing,
> In every place there's no hindrance, no conflict.
> Who assigns the ranks of vermilion and purple?—

The hills' and mountains' last speck of dust is extinguished.
[My] supernatural power and marvelous activity—
Drawing water and carrying firewood.

Shih-t'ou gave his assent. Then he asked: "Will you put on black robes or will you continue wearing white?"

"I want to do what I like," replied the Layman. So he did not shave his head or dye his clothing.

Kōan: Facing Downwards

Listen!

The Layman said to Yang-shan: "I have long wanted to meet you, Yang-shan. Now that I have arrived here why are you facing downwards?"

Yang-shan raised up his whisk.

"Exactly!" exclaimed the Layman.

"Is this [whisk] pointing upwards or downwards?" asked Yang-shan.

Striking an open-air post once, the Layman said: "Though there's no one else but us who sees, the post will testify for me."

Yang-shan threw away his whisk, saying: "You may show this wherever you please."

Anecdotes

One day the layman asked Ch'i-feng: "How many *li* is it from here to the top of your peak?"

"Where have you come from?" asked Ch'i-feng.

"It's so dreadfully steep that it can't be asked about," said the Layman.

"How much [steepness] is that?" asked Ch'i-feng.

"One, two, three," said the Layman.

"Four, five, six," said Ch'i-feng.

"Why not say seven?" asked the Layman.

"As soon as I said seven there would be eight," replied Ch'i-feng.

"You can stop there," said the Layman.

"You may go on," said Ch'i-feng.

The Layman shouted and went out.

Then Ch'i-feng shouted.

When the layman was walking with Tan-hsia one day he saw a deep pool of clear water. Pointing to it with his hand, he said: "Being as it is we can't differentiate it."

"Of course we can't," replied Tan-hsia.

The Layman scooped up and threw two handfuls of water on Tan-hsia.

"Don't do that, don't do that!" cried Tan-hsia.

"I have to, I have to!" exclaimed the Layman.

Whereupon Tan-hsia scooped up and threw three handfuls of water on the Layman, saying: "What can you do now?"

"Nothing else," replied the Layman.

"One seldom wins by a fluke," said Tan-hsia.

"Who lost by a fluke?" returned the Layman.

One day Po-ling said to the Layman: " 'Whether you can speak or whether you can't, you cannot escape.' Now tell me, what is it you can't escape?"

The Layman winked.

"Outstanding!" exclaimed Po-ling.

"You mistakenly approve me," said the Layman.

"Who doesn't, who doesn't?" returned Po-ling.

"Take care of yourself," said the Layman and went off.

One day Pen-hsi saw the Layman coming. He gazed at him for quite a while. The Layman then drew a circle with his staff. Pen-hsi came forward and stepped into it. "Thus, or not thus?" asked the Layman. Pen-hsi then drew a circle in front of the Layman. The Layman likewise stepped into it. "Thus, or not thus?" asked Pen-hsi. The Layman threw down his staff and stood still. "You came with a staff, but you go without a staff," remarked Pen-hsi. "Luckily it's made perfect," said the Layman. "Don't trouble to watch it." Pen-hsi clapped his hands, exclaiming: "Wonderful! There's not a thing to be attained!" The Layman picked up his staff and, tapping the ground step by step, went off. "Watch the road, watch the road!" called Pen-hsi.

Pen-hsi asked the Layman: "What was the first word Bodhidharma spoke when he came from the West?" "Who remembers!" said the Layman. "You have a poor memory," said Pen-hsi. "We mustn't speak hit-or-miss about affairs of olden days," said the Layman. "How about affairs right now?" asked Pen-hsi. "There's not a word to say," replied the Layman. "To say that in front of a wise man would be still more brilliant," responded Pen-hsi. "But you have a great eye," disagreed the Layman. "Only when it's thus can one speak without a hint," said Pen-hsi. "Not a single thing can be put into the eye," said the Layman. "The sun is just at the zenith: to raise the eyes is difficult," said Pen-hsi. "The dried skull is bored through," returned the Layman. Snapping his fingers, Pen-hsi said: "Who could discern it!" "What an outstanding fellow you are!" exclaimed the Layman. Pen-hsi returned to his quarters.

The Layman visited Chan Master Ta-mei. Hardly had they met when he said: "I've long wanted to meet you, Ta-mei. I wonder whether the plum is ripe or not."

"Ripe!" exclaimed Ta-mei. "What part do you want to bite?"

"Dried-fruit confection," returned the Layman.

"Then give me back the pits," said Ta-mei, stretching out his hand.

The Layman went off.

As Tse-ch'uan was sitting in his quarters one day, the Layman saw him and said: "You only know how to sit erect in your quarters; you're not aware when a monk comes for an interview."

Tse-ch'uan dropped one leg down.

The Layman went out two or three steps, and then turned back. Tse-ch'uan drew his leg back up.

"You're a man of complete flexibility!" the Layman exclaimed.

"But I'm the host," returned Tse-ch'uan.

Tse-ch'uan called his attendant and had him make tea. The Layman did a dance and went out.

The Layman was once lying on his couch reading a sutra. A monk saw him and said: "Layman! You must maintain dignity when reading a sutra."

The Layman raised up one leg.

The monk had nothing to say.

One day the Layman was in the market place of Hung-thou selling baskets. Seeing a monk begging alms, he took out a cash and said: "Can you tell me how to appreciate alms? If you can, then I'll give you this."

The monk had nothing to say.

"You ask me," said the Layman, "and I'll tell you."

"What is it to appreciate alms?" asked the monk.

"Man seldom hears it," said the Layman. "Do you understand?" he added.

"I don't understand," said the monk.

"Who is the one who doesn't understand?" asked the Layman.

The Layman and His Daughter Ling-chao

The Layman was sitting in his thatched cottage one day. "Difficult, difficult, difficult," he suddenly exclaimed, "[like trying] to scatter ten measures of sesame seed all over a tree!"

"Easy, easy, easy," returned Mrs. P'ang, "just like touching your feet to the ground when you get out of bed."

Figure 6. Anonymous (fifteenth-century Japan), *P'ang Ling-chao*

"Neither difficult nor easy," said Ling-chao. "On the hundred grass-tips, the Patriarchs' meaning."

The Layman was once selling bamboo baskets. Coming down off a bridge he stumbled and fell. When Ling-chao saw this she ran to her father's side and threw herself down.

"What are you doing!" cried the Layman.

"I saw Papa fall to the ground, so I'm helping," replied Ling-chao.

"Luckily no one was looking," remarked the Layman.

Layman P'ang's Death

The Layman was about to die. He spoke to Ling-chao, saying: "See how high the sun is and report to me when it's noon."

Ling-chao quickly reported: "The sun has already reached the zenith, and there's an eclipse." While the Layman went to the door to look out, Ling-chao seated herself in her father's chair and, putting her palms together reverently, passed away.

The Layman smiled and said: "My daughter has anticipated me."

He postponed [his going] for seven days.

The Prefect Yu Ti came to inquire about his illness. The Layman said to him: "I beg you just to regard as empty all that is existent and to beware of taking as real all that is non-existent. Fare you well in the world. All is like shadows and echoes." His words ended. He pillowed his head on Mr. Yii's knee and died.

His final request was that he be cremated and [the ashes] scattered over rivers and lakes. Monks and laity mourned him and said that the Zen adherent Layman P'ang was indeed a Vimalakirti. He left three hundred poems to the world.

Poems by the Layman

People have a one-scroll sutra
Without form and without name.
No man is able to unroll and read it,
And none of us can hear it.
When you are able to unroll and read it,
You enter the principle and accord with the Birthless.
Not to speak of becoming a Bodhisattva,
You don't even need to become Buddha.

White-robed, I don't adhere to appearances;
The true principle arises from Emptiness.

Because my mind's without obstruction
Wisdom goes forth to all directions.
I only consider the lion's roar,
I don't let wild jackals yap!
Bodhi [awakening] is said to be most marvelous,
But I scold it for being a false name.

Without no other, within no self.
Not wielding spear and shield, I accord with Buddha-wisdom.
Well-versed in the Buddha-way, I go the non-Way.
Without abandoning my ordinary man's affairs,
The conditioned and name-and-form all are flowers in the sky.
Nameless and formless; I leave birth-and-death.

Without any cause you lose your mind,
And run out the front gate seeking [it].
Although you try to question old friends,
All's quiet, without any trace [of them].
But returning to the hall, when you carefully consider it,
Transforming sentient beings, [in] accord with tranquility,
You cannot go outside and seek friends;
Of yourself, amidst your family, you enter Nirvana.

The past is already past—
Don't try to regain it.
The present does not stay,
Don't try to touch it from moment to moment.
The future is not come,
Don't think about it beforehand.
With the three times non-existent,
Mind is the same as Buddha-mind.
To silently function relying on Emptiness,
This is profundity of action.
Not the least dharma exists—
Whatsoever comes to eye leave it be.
There are no commandments to be kept,
There is no filth to be cleansed.
With empty mind really penetrated,
The dharmas have no life.
When you can be like this,
You've completed the ultimate attainment.

Not wanting to discard greed and anger,
In vain you trouble to read Buddha's teachings.
You see the prescription, but don't take the medicine—
How then can you do away with your illness!
Grasp emptiness, and emptiness is form;
Grasp form, and form is impermanent.
Emptiness and form are not mine—
Sitting erect, I see my native home.

When the mind's as is,
The spirit of itself is empty.
Without applying medicine,
Ills remove themselves.
With ills removed,
You naturally see the lotus-flower mani-jewel.
Don't trouble over affairs,
Don't bustle around!

—Translation by Ruth Fuller Sasaki,
Yoshitaka Iriya, and Dana Fraser

9

Selected Poems by Chinese Nuns

Although women monastics have been important in Zen history from very early days, there have been few translations of their writings until recent publications, one of which is Daughters of Emptiness *by Beata Grant. She includes poems by forty-eight nuns from the fifth through twentieth centuries, from which a selection is given here.*

The biographies of the nuns often have much in common, although some were taught by female and others by male Masters. Hui-hsu (431–499), from the Chou family, studied with Hsuan-ch'ang and then served as a Buddhist teacher to several members of the royal family. The emperor was so impressed that he built a convent for her; in her later years, she came forth only once, for a religious feast held in her honor, at which she wrote the quatrain given below.

Fa-yuan (601–663) had even stronger imperial connections. She was both the sixth-generation descendant of Emperor Wu Ti of Liang (the same ruler visited by Bodhidharma), and the third daughter of the T'ang Dynasty royal family; she became a noted Buddhist teacher in a convent in the capital city.

There were several outstanding female monastic teachers in the twelfth century. The scholar-husband of Chung-chueh (twelfth century) died while she was still young; she took Buddhist orders rather than marry again, living in the Fayun Convent. Pen-ming (early twelfth century) was a Dharma heir of Yuan-wu (1063–1135), and her verses were published after her death by Master Ts'ao-t'ang (1057–1142) and utilized in sermons by Ta-hui (1089–1163; see Chapter 14). Ta-hui also admired the Buddhist poems of Chen-ju (twelfth century), who left her life at court to become a monastic.

Chih-t'ung (died 1124) had a difficult time becoming a nun, since her scholar-official family at first refused to give her permission, but she eventually took Buddhist orders and lived in a convent in Suchou where she attracted many followers. One of her poems was composed to be inscribed over a monastery bathhouse that she had sponsored.

The nun Miao-tsung (1095–1170) came from a family of scholars and high government officials; she studied Zen with Ta-hui. She was especially noted for her poetry, and her recorded sayings as a Zen Master were also circulated (although they have mostly been lost over time). Her biography appears in this volume as Chapter 15.

"One-eyed" Ching-kang (n.d.) was said to have lost the use of one eye through reading the Diamond Sutra *too assiduously. After giving away all her possessions, she became celebrated for her sermons and discussions on this sutra; although her precise dates are unknown, she lived past the age of seventy.*

Like several of the female monastics here, Hsing-kang (1597–1654) was pressured by her parents to marry, and even lived as a dutiful proto-daughter-in-law after her fiancé died. After both her parents passed away, however, at the age of thirty-four she became a nun and studied with Mi-yun (1566–1642) and his disciple Shih-ch'e (1593–1638). After a decade of meditation, Hsing-kang served as abbess of the Crouching Lion Convent, where she had many followers including seven Dharma heirs.

One of Hsing-kang's students, Yi-k'uei (1625–1679), became a nun after her husband died when she was twenty-three years old. She eventually took her turn as abbess of the Crouching Lion Convent, and her Buddhist prose writings and poems were compiled before her death in 1679.

Born into an elite family, Yin-yueh (seventeenth century) was married at the age of sixteen despite her preference for a life of meditation, but at the age of thirty she studied with, and eventually became a Dharma heir of, Lin-yeh (1595–1652), a follower of Mi-yun. Yin-yueh thereupon lived in a small hermitage and called herself the "Crouching Dragon Abbess."

Ming-hsiu (n.d.) showed her religious spirit by refusing to eat meat as a child and declining to get married so she could care for her parents. After their deaths, she took Buddhist orders, traveling to many of the famous Buddhist sites in China and becoming known for both her teachings and her poetry.

Unlike many of the other nuns included here, Ching-no (late seventeenth century) entered Buddhist orders in her youth and eventually became the senior Dharma heir of the female Master Wei-chi (died 1672). Ching-no had hundreds of followers, and was able to laugh at herself for her love of words after giving up all other attachments.

Chi-fu (late seventeenth century) was a Dharma heir of Ji-ch'u (1605–1672), an heir of Han-yueh (1573–1635). Chi-fu served as abbess of two convents in the Hangchou area, and two collections of her writings were published. Her 1665 poem, "Twelve Hours of the Day" (each hour equals two of ours), gives us an idea of everyday Buddhist life in a convent.

Our final poet, Tao-ch'ien (died 1820), entered a convent at the age of seventeen and, after being tested on the "five obstacles" (that women faced in becoming Buddhas), received Dharma transmission from Pao-lin. Tao-ch'ien later attracted many followers and gained enough support to build a convent where she lived for forty years, combining Zen with Pure Land practices.

Worldly people who do not understand me
Call me by my worldly name of Old Zhou.
You invite me to a seven-day religious feast,
But the feast of meditation knows no end.

Hui-hsu (431–499)

This body without a self
Can be compared to floating duckweed.
This body with its troubles
Is exactly like a leaf in the wind.
This cycle of life and death
Is just like that of night and day.

Fa-yuan (601–663)

Spring morning on the lake: the wind merges with the rain,
Worldly matters are like flowers that fall only to bloom again.
I retire to contemplate behind closed doors, a place of true joy,
While the floating clouds come and go the whole day long.

The hidden birds on the treetops sing without pause,
The sky clears, the rain stops, the window brightens.
From the West came the wondrous meaning without words,
It may be gold dust, but don't let it get in your eyes!

Cheng-chueh (12th century)

Don't you know that afflictions are nothing more than wisdom,
But to cling to your afflictions is nothing more than foolishness?
As they rise and then melt away again, you must remember this:
The sparrow hawk flies through Silla without anyone noticing!

Don't you know that afflictions are nothing more than wisdom
And that the purest of blossoms emerges from the mire?
If someone were to come and ask me what I do:
After eating my gruel and rice, I wash my bowl.
Don't worry about a thing!

Don't worry about a thing!
You may play all day like a silly child in the sand by the sea,
But you must always realize the truth of your original face!
When you suffer the blows delivered by the patriarchs' staff,
If you can't say anything, you will perish by the staff,
If you can say something, you will perish by the staff.
In the end, what will you do
If you are forbidden to travel by night but must arrive by dawn?

Pen-ming (early 12th century)

I suddenly find myself upside-down on level ground;
When I pick myself up, I find there's nothing to say!
If someone should ask me what this is all about,
Smiling, I'd point to the pure breeze and bright moon.

Chen-ju (12th century)

Inscribed over a Monastery Bath-House

Since there is nothing that exists, what are you bathing?
If there is even a speck of dust, from where does it arise?
If you produce a single profound phrase,
Then everyone can come in and bathe.
The most the ancient holy ones can do is scrub your back;
When has a bodhisattva ever illuminated anyone's mind?
If you want to realize the stage beyond impurity,
You should sweat from every last pore of your body.
It is said that water is able to wash away impurities,
But how do you know that the water is also not dirty?
Even if you erase the distinction between water and dirt,
When you come in here, you must still be sure to bathe!

Within the vast expanse of dust essentially a single suchness,
Whether vertical or horizontal, everything bears the seal of Vairochana.
Although the entire wave is made of water, the wave is not the water;
Although all of the water may turn into waves, the water is still itself.

This is the first collection to offer selections from the foundational texts of the Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Zen traditions in a single volume. Through representative selections from their poetry, letters, sermons, and visual arts, the most important Zen Masters provide students with an engaging, cohesive introduction to the first 1,200 years of this rich—and often misunderstood—tradition. A general Introduction provides historical, biographical, and cultural context; notes on translation and a glossary are also included.

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—Brook Ziporyn, Northwestern University

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