

HEKIGANROKU

(Blue Cliff Record)

Main Cases

Contents

- CASE 1: Bodhidharma's "Clear and Void"*
CASE 2: Jôshû's "Supreme Way"
CASE 3: Master Ba Is Ill
CASE 4: Tokusan with His Bundle
CASE 5: Seppô's "Grain of Rice"
CASE 6: Unmon's "Good Day"
CASE 7: Echo Asks about Buddha
CASE 8: Suigan's "Eyebrows"
CASE 9: Jôshû's Four Gates
CASE 10: Bokushû's "Idiot"
CASE 11: Ôbaku's "Drinkers of Lees"
CASE 12: Tôzan's "Three Pounds of hemp" – See Mumonkan Case 18
CASE 13: Haryô's "Silver Bowl" – See Miscellaneous Koans Case 22a.
CASE 14: Unmon's "Preaching One Thing"
CASE 15: Unmon's "Preaching in the Reverse"
CASE 16: Kyôsei and "Picking and Pecking"
CASE 17: Kyôrin's "Sitting for a Long Time"
CASE 18: The National Teacher's Gravestone
CASE 19: Gutei's One Finger – See Mumonkan Case 3
CASE 20: Suibi and the Chin Rest
CASE 21: Chimon's "Lotus"
CASE 22: Seppô's "Poisonous Snake"
CASE 23: Hofuku and Chôkei Go on a Picnic
CASE 24: Tetsuma, the Cow
CASE 25: The Hermit of Lotus Peak
CASE 26: Hyakujô on Daiyû Peak
CASE 27: Unmon's "Complete exposure"
CASE 28: Nansen's "Dharma That Has Never Been Preached"
CASE 29: Daizui and the "Kalpa Fire"
CASE 30: Jôshû's "Giant Radishes"
CASE 31: Mayoku Circles Around the Master's Dais
CASE 32: Jô and the "Essence of Buddhism"
CASE 33: Chinsô Has One Eye
CASE 34: Kyôzan's "Not Wandering"
CASE 35: Manjusri's "Three Three"
CASE 36: Chôsa Goes Picnicking

CASE 37: Banzan's "Not One Thing in the Three Worlds"
CASE 38: Fuketsu's "Heart Seal"
CASE 39: Unmon's "Garden Fence"
CASE 40: Nansen and the Flower
CASE 41: Jôshû's "Great Death"
CASE 42: Hô Koji's "Beautiful Snow"
CASE 43: Tôzan's "Cold and Heat"
CASE 44: Kasan's "Beat the Drum"
CASE 45: Jôshû's "Cloth Robe"
CASE 46: Kyôsei and the Raindrops
CASE 47: Unmon's "Six"
CASE 48: Tea at Shôkei Templ
CASE 49: Sanshō's "Net"
CASE 50: Unmon and the "Dust-Dust Samadhi"
CASE 51: Seppō's "What Is This?"
CASE 52: Jôshû's Stone Bridge
CASE 53: Hyakujō and the Wild Ducks
CASE 54: Unmon Stretches His Arms
CASE 55: Dōgo's Condolence Visit
CASE 56: Kinzan and the "Arrow"
CASE 57: Jôshû and the "Bumpkin"
CASE 58: Jôshû and the "Pitfall"
CASE 59: Jôshû's "Supreme Way"
CASE 60: Unmon's Staff
CASE 61: Fuketsu's "House and Nation"
CASE 62: Unmon's "One Treasure"
CASE 63: Nansen Kills a Cat – See Mumonkan Case 14
CASE 64: Jôshû and the Sandals – See Mumonkan Case 14.
CASE 65: A Non-Buddhist Questions Buddha – See Mumonkan Case 32
CASE 66: Gantō and the "Sword"
CASE 67: Fu Daishi Expounds the Sutra
CASE 68: Kyōzan and "Your Name"
CASE 69: Nansen Draws a Circle
CASE 70: Isan's "Speak, Master"
CASE 71: Gohō's "Close!"
CASE 72: Ungan's "Can You?"
CASE 73: Ba and "One Hundred Negations"
CASE 74: Kingyū's Rice Bucket
CASE 75: Ukyū's Blind Stick

- CASE 76: Tanka's "Eating Rice"
- CASE 77: Unmon's "Rice Cake"
- CASE 78: The Bodhisattvas Take a Bath
- CASE 79: Tōsu and "the Buddha's Voices"
- CASE 80: Jōshū and a "Newborn Infant"
- CASE 81: Yakusan's "Look! The Arrow!"
- CASE 82: Dairyū and the "Dharma-Body"
- CASE 83: The Old Buddha and a Pillar
- CASE 84: Vimalakirti and "Not-Two"
- CASE 85: Tōhō and the "Tiger"
- CASE 86: Unmon's "Bright Light"
- CASE 87: Unmon's "Medicine and Disease"
- CASE 88: Gensha's "Three Diseases"
- CASE 89: Ungan's "Hands and Eyes"
- CASE 90: Chimon and the "Prajna Wisdom"
- CASE 91: Enkan and the "Rhinoceros"
- CASE 92: The Buddha Ascends to the Rostrum
- CASE 93: Taikō Dances
- CASE 94: "Non-Seeing" in the Ryōgon Sutra
- CASE 95: Chōkei's "Three Poisons"
- CASE 96: Jōshū's Three Turning Words – See Miscellaneous Koans Case 19
- CASE 97: "Getting Despised" in the Diamond Sutra
- CASE 98: Tempyō's Two "Wrong"s
- CASE 99: Shukusō and the "Buddha with the Ten Bodies"
- CASE 100: Haryō and the "Sharpest Sword" – See Miscellaneous Koans Case 22c

CASE 1: Bodhidharma's "Clear and Void"

Emperor Bu¹ of Ryô asked Great Master Bodhidharma, "What is the highest meaning of the holy reality?" Bodhidharma replied, "Clear and void, no holiness." The emperor said, "Who are you in front of me?" Bodhidharma said, "I don't know." The emperor did not match him. Finally, Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtse River and came to the kingdom of Gi.

Later, the emperor asked Shikô for his view. Shikô said, "Does Your Majesty know who this man is?" The emperor said, "I don't know."

Shikô said, "He is the Mahasattwa Avalokitesvara transmitting the seal of Buddha's Mind." The emperor regretted and wanted to send an emissary to invite Bodhidharma back. Shikô said, "Your Majesty, do not intend to send an emissary to fetch him back. Even if all the people in the land were to go after him, he would not return."

CASE 2: Jôshû's "Supreme Way"

Jôshû, instructing the assembly, said, "'The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing.'² But even if a word is uttered, it is already an action of 'choosing' or of adhering to 'clarity'. This old monk³ doesn't dwell in clarity. Do you monks want to keep a firm hold on it⁴ or not?"

At that time a monk asked, "You say you do not dwell in clarity. If so, what is there to keep a firm hold on?" Jôshû said, "I don't know, either." The monk said, "If you, Master, don't know, why do you say that you don't dwell in clarity?" Jôshû said, "You have already asked amply. Bow and withdraw."

CASE 3: Master Ba Is Ill

Great Master Ba was seriously ill. The chief priest of the temple asked him, "Master, how are you feeling these days?" Great Master said, "Sun-face Buddha, Moon-face Buddha⁵."

¹ Emperor Bu reigned over the land of Ryô between 502-509.

² Cf. the beginning of the Shinjinmei (Believing in the Mind; Poem composed by the Third Patriarch Sôsan): "The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing. Only if there is no love or hatred, all is complete clarity."

³ "this old monk" = "I."

⁴ "it" = "clarity."

⁵ The "Sun-face Buddha" is a buddha, who is said to have a life of 1800 years, while the "Moon-face Buddha" lives only 24 hours.

CASE 4: Tokusan with His Bundle

Tokusan arrived at Isan. Carrying his bundle under his arm, he stepped into the Dharma hall. He walked across it from east to west and from west to east. Looking around he said, "None, none!" and went out

(Setchô¹ commented: "Seen through!")

But when he got to the entrance gate, Tokusan said, "Still, I shouldn't be so hasty." So, he dressed formally and entered again to meet Isan. As Isan sat at his place, Tokusan held up his sitting cloth in a ceremonial manner and said, "Master!" Isan was about to take his whisk², when suddenly Tokusan shouted, "Kaatz!" Then he flourished his sleeves and went out.

(Setchô commented: "Seen through!")

Turning his back on the Dharma hall, Tokusan put on his straw sandals and left. In the evening, Isan asked the head monk, "Where is the newcomer who was here a while ago?" The head monk said, "He soon turned his back on the Dharma hall, put on his straw sandals and went away." Isan said, "One day that fellow will build a grass hut upon a lonely peak, and scold the buddhas and abuse the patriarchs."

(Setchô commented: "Piling up frost on top of snow.")

CASE 5: Seppô's "Grain of Rice"

Seppô, teaching the assembly, said, "When you pick up the whole earth in your fingers, it's the size of a grain of rice. I cast it down before you. Like in a black lacquer bucket, you don't recognize it any more. Beat the drum, call everyone to look for it!"

CASE 6: Unmon's "Good Day"

Unmon, giving instruction, said, "I don't ask you about before the fifteenth day; bring me a phrase about after the fifteenth day." Unmon himself answered in the monks' stead, "Every day is a good day."

¹ Setchô Zenji is the compiler of *the Hekiganroku*. Here he introduces his own comment.

² In Japanese: *hossu*. A stick with a flexible whisk on top.

CASE 7: Echo Asks about Buddha

A monk asked Hôgen, "I, Echô, ask you, Master. What is Buddha?" Hôgen said, "You are Echô."

CASE 8: Suigan's "Eyebrows"

Towards the end of summer¹, Suigan instructed the assembly, saying, "All summer I've preached to you, my brothers. Look here, are Suigan's eyebrows still there?²"

Hofuku said, "The robber's heart is terrified!"

Chôkei said, "They are well grown!"

Unmon said, "*Kan*³!"

CASE 9: Jôshû's Four Gates

A monk asked Jôshû, "What is Jôshû⁴?" Jôshû said, "East gate, west gate, south gate, north gate."

CASE 10: Bokushû's "Idiot"

Bokushû asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" At once the monk shouted, "Kaatz!" Bokushû said, "The old monk has been scolded by you with a 'Kaatz!'" The monk shouted again, "Kaatz!" Bokushû said, "After three or four shouts of 'Kaatz', then what?" The monk was silent. Bokushû hit him saying, "You idiot!"

CASE 11: Ôbaku's "Drinkers of Lees"

Ôbaku, instructing the assembly, said, "You are all drinkers of lees. If you continue to go on your Way like this, where will the 'Today'⁵ be? Do you know that in this great empire of Tang

¹ Summer-sesshin for 3 months.

² According to the popular belief a great criminal should lose his eyebrows as a sign of his coming punishment in hell.

³ Literally: "barrier" (cf. *Mumonkan*). in those days this Chinese word colloquially meant also, "Watch out!" or "There!"

⁴ The name of the Zen Master Jôshû is taken from the city "Jôshû", near which he taught.

⁵ The world of nirvana.

there is no Zen master?"

Now a monk came forward and said, "What would you say to the fact that in various places there are people who accept students and direct their assemblies?" Ôbaku said, "I don't say that there is no Zen; I only say that there is no master."

CASE 12: Tôzan's "Three Pounds of hemp"¹

A monk asked Tôzan, "What is Buddha?" Tôzan said, "Three pounds of hemp²."

CASE 13: Haryô's "Silver Bowl"³

A monk asked Haryô, "What is the Deva Sect?" Haryô said, "Heaping up snow in a silver bowl."

CASE 14: Unmon's "Preaching Fittingly"

A monk asked Unmon, "What is the teaching of the whole lifetime of Shakyamuni?" Unmon said, "Preaching one thing."⁴

CASE 15: Unmon's "Preaching in the Reverse"

A monk asked Unmon, "What is it that's not the function of the mind in me nor a thing before me?" Unmon said, "Preaching in the reverse."⁵

CASE 16: Kyôsei and "Picking and Pecking"

A monk asked Kyôsei, "I, your student, am picking from inside the shell. I beg you, Master, please peck from outside." Kyôsei said, "But will you be alive or not?" The monk said, "If I were not alive, people would all laugh." Kyôsei said, "You fool in the weeds!"

¹ Cf. Case 18 of the *Mumonkan*.

² In Japanese: *masagin*.

³ Cf. Case 22/a in the *Miscellaneous Koans*.

⁴ In Japanese: *Tai-issetsu*.

⁵ In Japanese: *Tôissetsu*

CASE 17: Kyôrin's "Sitting for a Long Time"

A monk asked Kyôrin, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"
Kyôrin said, "I am tired from sitting for a long time."

CASE 18: The National Teacher's Gravestone

Emperor Shukusô¹ asked Chû, the national teacher, "What would you wish me to do after a hundred years²?" The national teacher said, "Make a seamless gravestone³ for this old monk." The emperor said, "I should like to ask you, master, for a design." The national teacher remained silent for a long time. Then he said, "Did you understand?" The emperor said, "I didn't understand anything." The national teacher said, "I have a Dharma successor, my disciple Tangen, who is well versed with this matter. Let him come to you and ask him about it."

After the national teacher passed away, the emperor called Tangen and asked him about the meaning of this. Tangen responded:

"The south of the river, north of the lake:

(Setchô commented, "The single hand does not sound without reason.")

In between there's gold, which fills the whole land.

(Setchô commented, "A staff, hewn freshly from the mountain forest.")

Under the shadowless tree all people are in one boat;

(Setchô added, "The sea is peaceful, the river clear.")

In the crystal palace there is no one who knows.

(Setchô commented, "The speech is finished.")"

CASE 19: Gutei's One Finger⁴

Whatever he was asked about Buddhism, Master Gutei simply stuck up one finger.

¹ Historically speaking it was Emperor Daisô the oldest son and successor of Shukusô.

² After your death.

³ An egg-formed gravestone which is made out of a single piece of stone. It was often made for deceased monks.

⁴ Cf. Case 3 of the *Mumonkan*.

CASE 20: Suibi and the Chin Rest

Ryûge asked Suibi, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west?" Suibi said, "Bring me a chin rest¹." Ryûge brought one and gave it to him. Suibi took it and hit him. Ryûge said, "You may hit me as you like. After all there is no meaning to the Patriarch's coming from the west."

Ryûge also asked Rinzai, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the west?" Rinzai said, "Bring me a sitting cushion." Ryûge got one and gave it to Rinzai. Rinzai took it and hit him. Ryûge said, "You may hit me as you like. After all there is no meaning to the Patriarch's coming from the west."

CASE 21: Chimon's "Lotus"

A monk asked Chimon, "What is it when the lotus has not yet come out of the water?" Chimon said, "Lotus flowers." The monk asked, "What is it after the lotus has come out of the water?" Chimon replied, "Lotus leaves."

CASE 22: Seppô's "Poisonous Snake"

Seppô, instructing the assembly, said, "There's a poisonous snake on the southern side of the mountain. All of you should look at it carefully!" Chôkei said, "Today in the Zen hall there are many people. They have lost their body and life."

A monk told this to Gensha, who said, "Only Elder Brother Ryô² could say something like that. However, I wouldn't talk like that." The monk asked, "What then would you say, Master?" Gensha replied, "Why does it have to be 'the southern side of the mountain'?"

Unmon threw his staff in front of Seppô and acted frightened.

CASE 23: Hofuku and Chôkei Go on a Picnic

Once Hofuku and Chôkei went out on a picnic in the hills. Hofuku, pointing with a finger, said, "Right here is the summit of Myô Peak³." Chôkei said, "Exactly. But, it's regrettable."

(Setchô commented saying, "What's the use of making an excursion with these fellows today?" He again said, "Hundreds and thousands of years

¹ Literally: "Zen board." A narrow board used so as to let one sleep in the sitting posture.

² I.e., Chôkei

³ Literally: "the Peak of Wonder."

from now, I don't say that there will be none like him, only that there will be very few.")

Later, they reported to Kyôsei about it. Kyôsei said, "If it weren't for the Reverend Son¹, you would see only skeletons in the field."

CASE 24: Tetsuma, the Cow

Ryû Tetsuma² came to Isan. Isan said, "Old Cow, you have come!" Tetsuma said, "Tomorrow there will be a great feast at Mt. Tai³. Will you go there, Master?" Isan lay down and stretched himself out. Tetsuma left immediately.

CASE 25: The Hermit of Lotus Peak

The hermit of Lotus Peak⁴ took up his staff and showed it to the assembly, saying, "When the old ones⁵ reached this point, why didn't they dare to remain here?" The assembly was silent. He himself answered in their stead, saying, "Because that has no power on the Way." Again he said, "After all, how is it?" Once more he himself answered in their place, saying, "With my staff across my shoulders, and, paying other people no heed, I go straight into the thousand and ten thousand peaks."

CASE 26: Hyakujô on Daiyû Peak

A monk asked Hyakujô, "What is the matter of extraordinary wonder?" Hyakujô said, "Sitting alone on Daiyû⁶ Peak!" The monk made a deep bow. Hyakujô thereupon hit him.

CASE 27: Unmon's "Complete exposure"

A monk asked Unmon, "What is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" Unmon

¹ Namely Chôkei.

² A famous Zen person, once a student of Isan. Her name means "Ryû, the iron grindstone."

³ More exactly: Mt. Gotai, which is far away in the northern part of the country.

⁴ Originally "Rengehō." His real name was Shô, a Dharma grandson of Unmon Zenji.

⁵ The great Zen personages of old.

⁶ The name of the mountain, where Hyakujô's monastery was located.

answered, "Complete exposure of the golden wind¹."

CASE 28: Nansen's "Dharma That Has Never Been Preached"

Nansen went to see Master Hyakujô Nehan. Hyakujô asked, "Is there any Dharma that the sages of the past have never preached to the people?"

Nansen said, "There is." Hyakujô asked, "What is this Dharma that has never been preached to the people?" Nansen said, "This is not mind, this is not Buddha, this is not thing." Hyakujô said, "You did preach like that." Nansen said, "That's how it is with me. How about you, Master?" Hyakujô said, "I am not a man of great wisdom. How am I to know whether there is a Dharma that has been preached or that has never been preached?" Nansen said, "I don't understand." Hyakujô said, "I have already preached to you fully."

CASE 29: Daizui and the "Kalpa Fire"

A monk asked Daizui, "When the great kalpa fire is inflamed, the whole universe² will be destroyed. I wonder if *that* will also be destroyed or not." Daizui said, "Destroyed." The monk said, "If so, will *that* be gone with the other³?" Daizui said, "Gone with the other."

CASE 30: Jôshû's "Giant Radishes"

A monk asked Jôshû, "I've heard that you personally met Nansen⁴. Is it true or not?" Jôshû replied, "The province of Chin⁵ produces giant radishes."

CASE 31: Mayoku Circles Around the Master's Dais

Mayoku, with his ring-staff in hand, came to Shôkei. He circled Shôkei's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Shôkei said, "Right, right!"

(Setchô comments, "Wrong!")

¹ The autumn wind was also called "golden wind".

² Literally: "a billion worlds".

³ The word "the other" means "the universe."

⁴ I.e., "... that you were a student of Nansen."

⁵ The province of Chin was famous for producing great radishes. Jôshû's monastery was also located in that area.

Mayoku then came to Nansen. He circled Nansen's dais three times, shook the ring-staff and stood there bolt upright. Nansen said, "Not right, not right!"

(Setchô comments, "Wrong!")

Then, Mayoku said, "Master Shôkei said, 'Right, right!' Why, Master, do you say, 'Not right, not right!'" Nansen said, "With Shôkei it is right, but with you it is not right. This is nothing but a whirling of the wind¹. In the end, it will perish."

CASE 32: Jô and the "Essence of Buddhism"

A senior monk Jô asked Rinzai, "What is the essence of Buddhism?" Rinzai came down from his seat, grabbed him by the lapels, slapped him and thrust him away. Jô stood there as if rooted to the spot. A monk standing nearby said, "Senior monk Jô! Why don't you make a deep bow?" As he made a deep bow, Jô suddenly attained a great enlightenment.

CASE 33: Chinsô Has One Eye

National Secretary Chinsô went to see Shifuku. When Shifuku saw him coming, he drew a circle. Chinsô said, "It is already straying from the essence that your student has come to you at all. Why do you draw a circle in addition to that?" Thereupon Shifuku closed the door of his room.

(Setchô said, "Chinsô has but one eye.")

CASE 34: Kyôzan's "Not Wandering"

Kyôzan asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Mount Ro²." Kyôzan said, "Have you been to the Gorôhō Peak³?" The monk said, "No, I have never been there." Kyôzan said, "Then you have never been to the mountains at all!"

Unmon said, "Because of too much compassion these words have fallen into grasses."

¹ One of the four elements in Chinese physics (earth, air, fire, wind), wind is the element of movement.

² One of the most beautiful and most famous mountains in the southern part of China with many Zen monasteries.

³ The Gorôhō Peak, translated as "Five Elder" Peak, is the most noted peak of Mt. Ro.

CASE 35: Manjusri's "Three Three"

Manjusri asked Mujaku, "Where have you come from?" Mujaku answered, "From the south¹." Manjusri said, "How is the Buddhist Dharma in the South maintained?" Mujaku said, "The monks of this age of the corrupted Dharma are venerating the precepts a little." Manjusri said, "How many monks are over there?" Mujaku said, "Three hundred here, five hundred there." Mujaku asked Manjusri, "How is the Buddhist Dharma maintained here?" Manjusri said, "Worldly and Saints live together, dragons and snakes are mixed with each other." Mujaku said, "How many monks are here?" Manjusri said, "Three three before, three three behind."

CASE 36: Chôsa Goes Picnicking

One day, Chôsa went for a walk in the mountains. When he returned to the gate, the head monk said, "Where have you been, Master?" Chôsa said, "I was out walking about in the mountains." The head monk said, "Where did you go?" Chôsa said, "First, I went following the scented grass; then came back through the falling flowers." The head monk said, "It sounds very much like a spring mood." Chôsa said, "It's better than the autumn dew dropping on the lotus flower."

(Setchô commented, "I am grateful for that answer.")

CASE 37: Banzan's "Not One Thing in the Three Worlds"

Banzan, giving instruction, said, "In the Three Worlds², there is not one thing. Where should one seek the mind?"

CASE 38: Fuketsu's "Heart Seal"

When he was staying at the government office of the Province Ei, Fuketsu entered the hall [to preach] and said, "The heart seal³ [stamp] of the patriarch⁴ resembles the activity of the iron ox⁵. When it goes away, the [impression of the] seal remains; when it stays there, the

¹ The South of China, namely the region of Konan.

² The World of desires, the World of materials, and the World of non-materials.

³ The form of the heart-mind.

⁴ Bodhidharma.

⁵ An "iron ox" is a massive construction which lay at the bottom of the Yellow River. It stood against the great stream and protected the area from flood.

[impression of the] seal is brought to naught. If it neither goes away nor stays, would it be right to give a seal [of approval] or not?"

Then Elder Rohi came up and said, "I have the activities of the iron ox. [However,] I ask you, Master, not to give me the seal." Fuketsu said, "I am accustomed to leveling the great ocean through fishing whales. But, alas, now I find instead a frog wriggling about in the mud." Rohi stood there considering. Fuketsu shouted "Kaatz!" and said, "Why don't you say anything else, Elder?" Rohi was perplexed. Fuketsu hit him with his whisk and said, "Do you remember what you said? Say something, I'll check it for you." Rohi tried to say something. Fuketsu hit him again with his whisk.

The Magistrate said, "Buddha's law and the King's law are of the same nature." Fuketsu said, "What principle do you see in them?" The Magistrate said, "If you do not make a decision where a decision should be made, you are inviting disorder."

Fuketsu descended from the rostrum.

CASE 39: Unmon's "Garden Fence"

A monk asked Unmon, "What is the Pure Dharma-body¹?" Unmon said, "Flower fence"². The monk said, "What if I understand the point that way?" Unmon said, "A golden-haired lion."

CASE 40: Nansen and the Flower

Minister Rikukô talked with Nansen. Rikukô said, "Dharma-teacher Jô said, 'Heaven and earth and I have one and the same root; all things and I are one single body.' How wonderful this is!" Nansen pointed at the flowers in the garden, called to Rikukô and said, "People of our time³ see these flowers as in a dream."

CASE 41: Jôshû's "Great Death"

Jôshû asked Tôsu, "What is it if a man who has died a great Death comes back to life?" Tôsu said, "I don't allow walking about in the night. Come in the daylight."

¹ The body of the ultimate Truth (Jap. *hōshin*, sk. *dharmakaya*) or one of the three bodies of Buddha.

² In Japanese: *Kayakuran*. It actually was a flower fence around a restroom.

³ I.e. "you."

CASE 42: Hô Koji's "Beautiful Snow"

Hô Koji¹ was leaving Yakusan. The latter ordered ten of his Zen students to see Koji off at the temple gate. Koji pointed to the falling snow in the air and said, "Beautiful snow-flakes! -- they don't fall on any other place." At that time there was a student named Zen, who said, "Where then do they fall?" Koji gave him a slap. Zen said, "Koji, don't be so rough." Koji said, "If you name yourself Zen student in such a condition, Old En² will never release you!" Zen said, "What then would you say, Koji?" Koji slapped him again and said, "You see with your eyes but you are just like a blind man. You speak with your mouth, but you are just like a dumb man."

(Setchô added his comment, "At the first words, I immediately would have made a snowball and threw it against him.")

CASE 43: Tôzan's "Cold and Heat"

A monk asked Tôzan, "When cold and heat come, how should one avoid them?" Tôzan said, "Why not go to a place where there is neither cold nor heat?" The monk said, "What kind of place is it where there is neither cold nor heat?" Tôzan said, "When it is cold, the cold kills you; when it is hot, the heat kills you."

CASE 44: Kasan's "Beat the Drum"

Kasan, giving instruction, said, "Practicing and learning -- it is called 'hearing' (*mon*); completing learning -- it is called 'being next [to the fact]' (*rin*). When you have passed through these two, it is called 'true passing' (*shinka*). "

A monk stepped forward and asked, "What is the 'true passing'?"

Kasan said, "Beat the drum." He asked again, "What is the true Reality?" Kasan said, "Beat the drum." He asked again, "I do not ask about the sentence, 'Mind itself is Buddha.'³ [But] What does 'Neither Mind nor Buddha'⁴ mean?" Kasan said, "Beat the drum." He asked once more, "When someone who knows the ultimate Truth comes, how should we receive him?" Kasan said, "Beat the drum!"

¹ *Koji* is an honorific for a lay practitioner of Buddhism.

² Usually named "Emma-Daiô (the King of hell Emma). He is supposed to be the fearful judge at the entrance of the realm of the dead.

³ Cf. Case 30 in the *Mumonkan*.

⁴ Cf. Case 33 in the *Mumonkan*.

CASE 45: Jôshû's "Cloth Robe"

A monk asked Jôshû, "The ten thousand Dharmas¹ come down to one. What does the one come down to?" Jôshû said, "When I was living in the Province of Sei, I made a cloth robe. It weighed seven pounds."

CASE 46: Kyôsei and the Raindrops

Kyôsei asked a monk, "What is that sound outside?" The monk said, "That is the sound of raindrops." Kyôsei said, "People live in a topsy-turvy world. They lose themselves in delusion about themselves and only pursue [outside] objects." The monk said, "What about you, Master?" Kyôsei said, "I was on the brink of losing myself in such delusions about myself." The monk said, "What do you mean, 'on the brink of losing myself in such delusions about myself?'" Kyôsei said, "To break through [into the world of Essence] may be easy. But to express fully the bare substance is difficult."

CASE 47: Unmon's "Six"

A monk asked Unmon, "What is the Dharma-body²?" Unmon said, "The six³ can't grasp it."

CASE 48: Tea at Shôkei Temple

Minister Ô⁴ visited Shôkei Temple, where he offered tea. The senior monk Rô took up the kettle to serve Myôshô⁵. But Rô overturned the kettle [over the tea hearth]. The minister saw this and asked the senior monk, "What is there under the tea hearth?" Rô said, "Deities

¹ The word "Dharma" means here "phenomenon". "Ten thousand Dharmas" means, therefore, "all things that exist in the world of phenomena".

² Cf. the note to Case 39.

³ The "Six" means "six roots" (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, consciousness), "six objects" (color, voice, taste, touch, phenomenon), and/or "six functions" (see, hear, smell, taste, feel, know). Or it could be any other "six"-ness.

⁴ Minister Ô was a patron of Shôkei Temple.

⁵ Myôshô was senior to Rô. He was the abbot of the neighboring temple and was apparently invited to the tea too.

holding up the hearth¹." The minister said, "If they are deities holding up the hearth, why did they overturn the kettle?" Rô said, "Thousand days of good service -- all is lost in one morning." The minister flourished his sleeves and went out.

Myôshô said, "Elder Rô, you have eaten plenty of rice in Shôkei Temple, and yet you are simply a [useless] stump in the field." Rô said, "What would you have said, Master?"

Myôshô said, "These non-human beings² wreaked havoc."

(Setchô said, "At that moment I would have kicked over the tea hearth.")

CASE 49: Sanshô's "Net"

Sanshô asked Seppô, "When a fish with golden scales has passed through the net, what should it get for food?" Seppô said, "I will tell you when you have passed through the net."

Sanshô said, "A great Zen master with 1500 disciples doesn't know how to speak." Seppô said, "The old monk³ is just too busy with temple affairs."

CASE 50: Unmon and the "Dust-Dust Samadhi"

A monk asked Unmon, "What is the dust-dust samadhi⁴?" Unmon said, "Rice in the bowl, water in the pail."

CASE 51: Seppô's "What Is This?"

When Seppô was living in a hermitage, two monks came to pay their respects. When he saw them coming, Seppô thrust open the gate of his hermitage with his hands, jumped out, and said, "What is this?" The monks also said, "What is this?" Seppô hung his head and retired into his hermitage.

Later, the monks came to Gantô. He asked them, "Where have you come from?" The monks said, "From Reinan⁵." Gantô said, "Did you ever visit Seppô?" The monks said, "Yes, we visited him." Gantô said, "What did he say?" The monks related what had happened. Gantô said, "What else did he say?" The monks said, "Not a word; he hung his head and

¹ The legs of the tea hearth were shaped like demi-gods.

² I.e., the "deities who hold up the hearth".

³ I.e., "I".

⁴ The word "dust" comes from the expression "six dust particles", which means the same thing as the "six objects" (cf. note to Case 47).

⁵ A region in the south, where Seppô was living at that time.

retired into his hermitage." Gantô said, "Ah, how I regret now that in those days I did not tell him the last word! If I had told it to him, no one under heaven could do anything against him."

At the end of the summer practice period the monks came back to this conversation and asked him about its meaning. Gantô said, "Why didn't you ask me about it sooner?" The monk said, "We could not dare to ask you about it." Gantô said, "Seppô was born on the same stem as I¹, but he will not die on the same stem. If you want to know the last word, it is just this."

CASE 52: Jôshû's Stone Bridge

A monk asked Jôshû, "For a long time, the stone bridge of Jôshû² has echoed in my ears. But now that I've come here, I just see a log bridge." Jôshû said, "You simply see a log bridge; you don't see the stone bridge yet." The monk said, "What is the stone bridge?" Jôshû said, "It lets donkeys cross, it lets horses cross."

CASE 53: Hyakujô and the Wild Ducks

When Great Master Ba was walking with Hyakujô, he saw wild ducks flying by. The Great Master said, "What is that?" Hyakujô said, "Wild ducks." The Great Master said, "Where did it go?" Hyakujô said, "They flew away." The Great Master twisted Hyakujô's nose tip. Hyakujô cried out in pain. The Great Master said, "Why flew away?"

CASE 54: Unmon Stretches His Arms

Unmon asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Saizen." Unmon said, "What words does Saizen say lately?" The monk stretched out his arms. Unmon slapped him. The monk said, "I have something to say about it." Unmon then stretched out his own arms. The monk remained silent. Then Unmon hit him.

CASE 55: Dôgo's Condolence Visit

Dôgo and Zengen came to a house to express condolences. Zengen tapped on the coffin and said, "Is this life or death?" Dôgo said, "I don't say life, I don't say death." Zengen said,

¹ Seppô and Gantô were both students of Tokusan; cf. Case 13 in the *Mumonkan*.

² Cf. the note to Case 9.

"Why don't you?" Dôgo said, "I won't say, I won't say."

On the way back Zengen said, "Master, please say it to me right away. If you don't, I shall hit you." Dôgo said, "If you want to hit me, you can hit me. But I will never say." Thereupon Zengen hit him.

Some time later Dôgo passed away. Zengen went to Sekisô and told him what had happened. Sekisô said, "I don't say life, I don't say death." Zengen said, "Why don't you?" Sekisô said, "I won't say, I won't say." With these words, Zengen came suddenly to an insight.

One day, Zengen took a hoe and walked in the Dharma-hall from east to west and west to east. Sekisô said, "What are you doing?" Zengen said, "I am seeking the sacred bones of the late master." Sekisô said, "Giant billows far and wide; whitecaps swelling up to heaven. What sort of sacred bones of your late master are you searching for?"

(Setchô commented, "Heavens! heavens!")

Zengen said, "That was very good for me in order to gain power."

Taigen Fu¹ said, "The sacred bones of the late master are still there."

CASE 56: Kinzan and the "Arrow"

A Zen devotee named Ryô asked Kinzan, "What is it when one single arrow breaks through three barriers?" Kinzan said, "Drive out the master from behind the barriers, so that I may see him." Ryô said, "If so, I will acknowledge my failure and correct it." Kinzan said, "Till when do you want to wait?" Ryô said, "I made a nice shot, but no one could see the arrow," and he went out. Kinzan said, "Wait, sir." Ryô turned his head. Kinzan grasped him and said, "Let's put aside the story of the arrow which breaks through three barriers. Just shoot an arrow for me, so that I may see it." Ryô hesitated. Kinzan hit him seven times with a stick and said, "I will allow this fellow to keep puzzling for thirty years."

CASE 57: Jôshû and the "Bumpkin"

A monk asked Jôshû, "'The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing'. What is non-choosing?" Jôshû said, "Above the heavens and under the heavens I am the only one, alone and exalted." The monk said, "That is still choosing." Jôshû said, "You stupid bumpkin, where is the choosing?" The monk remained silent.

¹ He stood in the Dharma line of Seppô.

CASE 58: Jōshū and the "Pitfall"

A monk asked Jōshū, "'The supreme Way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing.' Isn't that the pitfall of the people of our time?" Jōshū said, "Once someone asked me like that. I am sorry that even after five years I still can't give an answer to it."

CASE 59: Jōshū's "Supreme Way"

A monk asked Jōshū, "'The supreme way is not difficult, it simply dislikes choosing. But even if a word is uttered, it is already an action of 'choosing.' -- Then how can you, Master, try to lead other people?" Jōshū said, "Why don't you quote the sentence to the end?" The monk said, "I just had this much in my mind." Jōshū said, "It's only: 'The supreme way is not difficult; it simply dislikes choosing.'"²

CASE 60: Unmon's Staff

Unmon showed his staff to the assembly and said, "This staff has changed into a dragon and has swallowed up the heaven and the earth. Where do mountains, rivers and the great earth come from?"

CASE 61: Fuketsu's "House and Nation"

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

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

CASE 62: Unmon's "One Treasure"

Unmon, instructing the assembly, said, "'Within heaven and earth, in the midst of the universe, there is one treasure hidden in a body.'³ You take up the lantern and go to the Buddha Hall; you take the temple gate and puts it on the lantern."

¹ Cf. note to Case 40.

² Cf. Case 2.

³ A sentence from the Hōzōron by Monk Jō (?-414).

CASE 63: *Nansen Kills a Cat*¹

Once the monks of the eastern and western Zen halls in Nansen's temple were quarrelling about a cat. As he saw this, Nansen held up the cat and said, "You monks! If one of you can say a word, I will not slay the cat." No one could answer. Nansen cut the cat in two.

CASE 64: *Jôshû and the Sandals*²

Nansen told Jôshû what had happened, and asked him for his view. Jôshû thereupon took his sandals, put them upon his head and went away.

Nansen said, "If you had been there, I could have spared the cat."

CASE 65: *A Non-Buddhist Questions Buddha*³

A non-Buddhist asked Buddha, "I do not ask about words, I do not ask about no-words." Buddha remained still. The non-Buddhist praised him and said, "The great benevolence and great mercy of the World-Honored One have opened the clouds of my delusion and enabled me to enter the Way." After the non-Buddhist took his leave, Ananda asked Buddha, "What did the non-Buddhist realize so that he said you had enabled him to enter the Way?" Buddha said, "He is like a fine horse that runs even at the shadow of a whip."

CASE 66: *Gantô and the "Sword"*

Gantô asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Saikyô⁴." Gantô said, "After Kôsô⁵ was gone, did you get his sword?" The monk said, "Yes, I got it." Gantô stuck out his neck, approached the monk, and said, "Ka!" The monk said, "The Master's head has already fallen." Gantô laughed loudly.

Later, the monk came to Seppô. Seppô asked, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From Gantô." Seppô asked, "What did he say?" The monk told him what had happened. Seppô gave him thirty blows with his stick and drove him away.

¹ Cf. Case 14 in the *Mumonkan*.

² Cf. Case 14 in the *Mumonkan*.

³ Cf. Case 32 in the *Mumonkan*.

⁴ The western capital of the Tang Dynasty.

⁵ A rebel who -- according to a legend -- received a sword from heaven on which it was inscribed, "Heaven gives Kôsô this sword." He conquered Saikyô in 880, but was killed four years later.

CASE 67: *Fu Daishi Expounds the Sutra*

The emperor Bu of Ryô¹ invited Fu Daishi² and asked him to lecture on the Diamond Sutra. Daishi thereupon mounted the rostrum, struck the lectern once and descended. The emperor Bu was astounded. Shikô³ asked him, "Did Your Majesty understand it?" The emperor said, "No." Shikô said, "Daishi has already finished his Sutra lecture."

CASE 68: *Kyôzan and "Your Name"*

Kyôzan asked Sanshō, "What's your name?" Sanshō said, "Ejaku⁴." Kyôzan said, "Ejaku -- that's me." Sanshō said, "My name is Enen⁵." Kyôzan laughed loudly.

CASE 69: *Nansen Draws a Circle*

Nansen, Kisu and Mayoku set out together to pay their respects to the National Teacher Chū. On their way Nansen drew a circle on the ground and said, "If you can say something, then let's go farther." Kisu seated himself⁶ in the circle. Mayoku made an informal bow. Nansen said, "If it is so, then let's not go any farther." Kisu said, "What is this all about?"

CASE 70: *Isan's "Speak, Master"*

Isan, Gohō and Ungan were all attending upon Hyakujō. Hyakujō asked Isan, "How does one speak with one's lips and throat closed?" Isan said, "I'd rather have you speak, Master." Hyakujō said, "I might as well speak to you, but then, I would lose my Dharma descendants."

¹ Cf. Case 1.

² "Daishi" means Bodhisattva.

³ Cf. Case 1.

⁴ The complete name of Kyôzan is "Kyôzan Ejaku".

⁵ The complete name of Sanshō is Sanshō Enen.

⁶ I.e., in Zazen posture.

CASE 71: Gohô's "Close!"

Hyakujô said to Gohô, "How does one speak with one's lips and throat closed?" Gohô said, "You too, Master, should close your lips and throat." Hyakujô said, "Where there is no one, I will shade my eyes with my hand¹ and look up to you respectfully."

CASE 72: Ungan's "Can You?"

Hyakujô said to Ungan, "How does one speak with one's lips and throat closed?" Ungan said, "Can you, Master, do such a thing?" Hyakujô said, "Now I will lose my Dharma descendants."

CASE 73: Ba and "One Hundred Negations"²

A monk asked Great Master Ba, "Apart from the Four Phrases, beyond one hundred Negations³, please tell me directly, Master, the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West." Master Ba said, "I am tired today, I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Chizô." The monk asked Chizô about it. Chizô said, "Why don't you ask our master?" The monk said, "He told me to ask you." Chizô said, "I have a headache today, I can't explain it to you. Go and ask Brother Kai." The monk asked Brother Kai about it. Kai said, "I don't understand nothing about that question." The monk told Great Master Ba about it. Great Master said, "Chizô's head is white, Kai's head is black."

CASE 74: Kingyû's Rice Bucket

At each meal, Master Kingyû himself would bring the rice bucket to the front of the Zen hall, dance there and laugh loudly, saying, "Dear Bodhisattvas, come and eat rice!"

(Setchô said, "Although he behaved that way, he was not being kind.")

A monk asked Chôkei, "An ancient worthy said, 'Dear Bodhisattvas, come and eat rice.' What does it mean?" Chôkei said, "That is exactly like praising and giving thanks to the rice."

CASE 75: Ukyû's Blind Stick

¹ A gesture expressing admiration.

² Cf. Case 6 in the *Shôyôroku*.

³ I.e., free from all theories and concepts.

A monk came from Master Jōshū¹ to Ukyū. Ukyū asked, "What is the difference between Jōshū's Dharma-way and the Dharma-way here?" The monk said, "There is no difference." Ukyū said, "If there isn't any difference, return to him again," and hit him. The monk said, "Your stick should have an eye. You should not hit a person so recklessly." Ukyū said, "Today I hit a right man," and he hit him three more times. The monk went out immediately. Ukyū said, "There is a fellow who well deserves a blind stick." The monk turned and said, "What shall I do, as the stick is in your hand?" Ukyū said, "If you need it, I will give it to you." The monk approached him, snatched the stick from his hand and hit him three times. Ukyū said, "Blind stick, blind stick!" The monk said, "There is a fellow who well deserves it." Ukyū said, "I have hit a real man quite wantonly." Then the monk promptly made a bow. Ukyū said, "Master, is that all right for you?" The monk laughed loudly and went away. Ukyū said, "Is that right, is that right!"

CASE 76: Tanka's "Eating Rice"

Tanka asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk answered, "From the foot of the mountain." Tanka asked, "Have you eaten your rice?" The monk said, "Yes I have eaten it." Tanka said, "The one who brought rice and gave it to you to eat – did he have an [enlightened] eye?" The monk said nothing.

Chōkei asked Hofuku, "Surely it is an act of thanksgiving² to bring rice and give it to the people to eat. How then is it possible not to have an [enlightened] eye?" Hofuku said, "Server and receiver are both blind."

Chōkei said, "Even if one has done everything, does one still remain blind, or not?" Hofuku said, "Do you call me blind?"

CASE 77: Unmon's "Rice Cake"

A monk asked Unmon, "What is meant by the pronouncement 'to go beyond the Buddha and the patriarchs'?" Unmon said, "Rice cake³."

¹ This is not the famous master Jōshū Jūshin in the *Mumonkan*, etc., but Master Jōshū Sekizō (718-800).

² That is, for the guidance already received from buddhas, patriarchs and masters.

³ In Japanese: *kobyō*.

CASE 78: The Bodhisattvas Take a Bath

In the old days there were sixteen bodhisattvas. When the monks took a bath, they too entered the bath according to their custom. At once they realized the cause of water. Now, my Zen friends, how do you understand this?¹ The bodhisattvas said, "Wonderful feeling! Perfectly clear! We have attained the dwelling place of the children of Buddha." You can attain it -- only by breaking through seven times and digging through eight times.

CASE 79: Tôsu and "the Buddha's Voices"

A monk asked Tôsu, "It is said, 'All voices are the voices of the Buddha.' Is it true or not?" Tôsu said, "It is true." The monk said, "Master, don't fart around so loudly." Thereupon, Tôsu hit him. He asked again, "It is said, 'Rough words and gentle phrases return to the first principle.' Is this true or not?" Tôsu said, "It is true." The monk said, "May I call you, Master, a donkey?" Thereupon, Tôsu hit him.

CASE 80: Jôshû and a "Newborn Infant"

A monk asked Jôshû, "Does a newborn infant have the Six Functions² or not?" Jôshû said, "Throwing a ball on the swift current."

The monk asked also Tôsu, "What does 'throwing a ball on the swift current' mean?" Tôsu said, "Every consciousness flows without ceasing."

CASE 81: Yakusan's "Look! The Arrow!"

A monk asked Yakusan, "On the grassy plain there gather great and small deer. How can one shoot the greatest deer of them all?" Yakusan said, "Look! The arrow!" The monk threw himself on the floor. Yakusan said, "Attendants! Carry this dead fellow out of here." Thereupon, the monk ran away. Yakusan said, "This fellow will keep playing with mud balls for ever and ever!"

(Setchô took up this story and said, "He is alive for three steps, but he should die with the fifth step.")

¹ It is Setchô who speaks here.

² Cf. the note to Case 47.

CASE 82: Dairyû and the "Dharma-Body"

A monk asked Dairyû, "The phenomenal body perishes. What is the Dharma-body which remains solid?" Dairyû said, "The autumn foliage of the mountains spreads like brocade; the water in the valley remains blue as indigo."

CASE 83: The Old Buddha and a Pillar

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

CASE 84: Vimalakirti and "Not-Two"

Vimalakirti asked Manjusri, "What does it mean that the Bodhisattva enters the Dharma-gate of Not-Two?" Manjusri said, "I see it like this: in all phenomena, there are neither words nor explanations, neither presentations nor knowledge; it is beyond all questions and answers. That is what I understand with 'to enter the Dharma-gate of Not-Two'."

Then Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, "All of us have finished giving our explanations. Now you should give your explanation. What does it mean that the Bodhisattva enters the Dharma-gate of Not-Two?"

(Setchô said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" Again he said, "Seen through!")

CASE 85: Tôhô and the "Tiger"

A monk came to the hermit Tôhô and asked, "What if you suddenly faced a tiger here?" The hermit roared like a tiger. Thereupon the monk pretended to be frightened. The hermit laughed loudly. The monk said, "You old robber!" The hermit said, "What can you do to me?" The monk said nothing further.

(Setchô said, "They are certainly right, but these two evil robbers only know how to steal a small bell while they stop their ears.")

CASE 86: Unmon's "Bright Light"

Unmon, giving instruction, said, "Everyone has his own bright light. When you look at it, you can't see it; it is complete darkness. Now, what is your bright light?" He himself

answered on behalf of the monks, "The kitchen and the entrance gate." Again he said, "It would be better not to have even the best things."

CASE 87: Unmon's "Medicine and Disease"

Unmon, instructing the assembly, said, "Medicine and disease correspond to each other. The whole earth is medicine. What is your true self?"

CASE 88: Gensha's "Three Diseases"

Gensha, instructing the assembly, said, "All old masters said, 'Attend to the living beings and save them.' Suppose you faces three people with different diseases, how would you attend to them? The blind person can't see, even if you take up a gavel or raise a whisk. The deaf person can't hear, even if you speak beautiful phrases. The dumb person can't speak, even if you ask him to speak up. How would you attend to them? If you cannot attend to these people, Buddhist Dharma has no true efficacy."

A monk asked Unmon about this. Unmon said, "Make a deep bow." The monk made a deep bow and stood up. Unmon poked his staff at him. The monk retreated. Unmon said, "So you are not blind." Further he said, "Come here." The monk came closer to him. Unmon said, "So you are not deaf." Then he said, "Have you understood?" The monk said, "No." Unmon said, "So you are not dumb." With that, the monk came to an insight.

CASE 89: Ungan's "Hands and Eyes"

Ungan asked Dôgo, "What does the Bodhisattva of the Great Mercy use so many hands and eyes for?" Dôgo answered, "It is like a person in the middle of the night reaching with his hand behind his head groping for his pillow." Ungan said, "I understood." Dôgo said, "How did you understand it?" Ungan said, "The whole body is hands and eyes." Dôgo said, "You said it very well. But you expressed only eight-tenths of it." Ungan said, "How would you say it, Elder Brother?" Dôgo said, "The entire body is hands and eyes."

CASE 90: Chimon and the "Prajna Wisdom"

A monk asked Chimon, "What is the substance of Prajna Wisdom?"

Chimon said, "The clam swallows the bright moon."¹ The monk asked, "What is the use of Prajna Wisdom?" Chimon said, "A female rabbit becomes pregnant."²

CASE 91: Enkan and the "Rhinoceros"

One day, Enkan called to his attendant, "Bring me the rhinoceros fan."

The attendant said, "It is broken." Enkan said, "If the fan is already broken, bring me the rhinoceros himself." The attendant gave no answer.³

Tôsu said, "I wouldn't mind bringing that, but the horn on its head would not be complete."

(Setchô said, "I need to see that incomplete horn.")

Sekisô said, "If I brought it back to you, nothing would remain [for me]."

(Setchô said, "That rhinoceros is still there.")

Shifuku drew a circle and wrote the ideograph "ox"⁴ in it.

(Setchô said, "Why didn't you bring it out sooner?")

Hofuku said, "Master, you are so advanced in years. Please engage someone else."⁵

(Setchô said, "Regrettable! All efforts have proved fruitless!")

CASE 92: The Buddha Ascends to the Rostrum

One day, the World-Honored One ascended to the rostrum. Monjusri struck the table with the gavel and said, "Contemplate clearly the Dharma of the Dharma-King! The Dharma of the Dharma-King is like this." Thereupon, the World-Honored One descended from the rostrum.

CASE 93: Taikô Dances

A monk asked Taikô, "Chôkei said, 'That is exactly like thanksgiving at lunch.'⁶ What did he mean?" Taikô danced. The monk made a deep bow. Taikô said, "What have you seen that

¹ A Chinese metaphor expressing how a pearl is formed.

² According to a Chinese legend, a female rabbit becomes pregnant when it swallows the light of the full moon.

³ To this episode the following Zen personalities give their answers on behalf of the attendant.

⁴ The Chinese character for "ox" (*gyû*) is one of the two characters for "rhinoceros" (*saigyû* = sai + gyû*).

⁵ [Since the task you give me is too harsh.]

⁶ Cf. Case 74.

makes you bow like that?" The monk danced. Taikô said, "You stupid fox!"¹

CASE 94: "Non-Seeing" in the Ryôgon Sutra

The Ryôgon Sutra says, "When I don't see, why do you not see what I do not see? If you [argue that you] see what I do not see, that is of course not what I do not see. If you do not see what I do not see, then it is quite natural that it is not a thing. Why is it not your self?"

CASE 95: Chôkei's "Three Poisons"

One day Chôkei said, "Even if you argue that an arhat² still possesses 'the three poisons', don't argue that the Tathagata has two sorts of language. I do not say the Tathagata has no words. I only say he does not have two kinds of language." Hofuku said, "What are the words of the Tathagata?" Chôkei said, "How can a deaf man hear?" Hofuku said, "Now I know that your language belongs to the second level." Chôkei said, "What are the words of the Tathagata?" Hofuku said, "Have some tea."

CASE 96: Jôshû's Three Turning Words³

Jôshû showed the assembly three turning words:

"The Buddha made of clay will not pass through water."

"The Buddha made of metal will not pass through a furnace."

"The Buddha made of wood will not pass through fire."

CASE 97: "Getting Despised" in the Diamond Sutra

The Diamond Sutra says, "It is about getting despised by other people. If you are to come into hell because of your sins in your previous life, these sins will be extinguished because you are despised by the people of this world."

¹ Cf. the term "fox Zen", which means mere imitation (cf. Case 2 in the *Mumonkan*)

² An arhat is a sacred person who has reached the spiritual dimension without any traces of "the three poisons": covetousness, anger, folly.

³ Cf. Case 19 in the *Miscellaneous Koans*.

CASE 98: Tempyô's Two "Wrong"s

Master Tempyô was on an angya¹ and visited Sai'in. (He was always saying, "Don't say you have understood Buddhism. I have sought after someone who could give correct explanations, but in vain.")

One day, Sai'in saw him at a distance and summoned him, "Jyûi!²" Tempyô raised his head. Sai'in said, "Wrong!" Tempyô went on a couple more steps. Sai'in said again, "Wrong!" Tempyô came closer. Sai'in said, "I have just said, 'Wrong!' twice. Does it mean that it is I who am wrong, or it is you?" Tempyô said, "It is I." Sai'in said, "Wrong!" Tempyô said nothing. Sai'in said, "Please stay here for the summer³. I'll examine the two 'Wrong!'s with you." However, Tempyô immediately left him.

Later he was the abbot of his own temple and said to his assembly, "As I was once on an angya, I was driven by the wind of fate and came to Elder Shimyô⁴, who cried to me, 'Wrong!'. Moreover, he demanded that I stay with him for the summer to examine this matter with him. I didn't believe I had done anything wrong then. But when I was on my way down south, I realized quickly that I had done something entirely 'wrong!'."

CASE 99: Shukusô and the "Buddha with the Ten Bodies"

Emperor Shukusô asked the National Teacher Echû, "What is the Buddha with the ten bodies who guides the living beings?" The National Teacher said, "Sir! Go beyond the head of Vairokana⁵." The emperor said, "I don't understand it." The National Teacher said, "Never consider yourself to be even the pure Dharma-body."

CASE 100: Haryô and the "Sharpest Sword"⁶

A monk asked Haryô, "What is the sharpest sword?" Haryô said, "The moon sits on each branch of the coral."

¹ A traditional pilgrimage in order to deepen the practice.

² Tempyô's personal name.

³ I.e., a summer sesshin for three months.

⁴ I.e., Sai'in.

⁵ The Buddha of the pure Dharma-body.

⁶ Cf. Case 22 (c) in the *Miscellaneous Koans*.

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