

The Gateless Gate

The Gateless Gate or *The Gateless Barrier* (Chin. Wu-wen kuan; Jap. Mumonkan)

The author is Chinese Ch'an master *Wu-men Hui-hai* (無門慧開 *Mumon Ekai*, 1183-1260).

English Translation

By late Zen master *Katsuki Sekida* (*Two Zen Classics* 26-137)

Original Chinese Text

The original Chinese text is taken from the following Japanese web site:

<https://homepage1.nifty.com/poem-club/mumonkan/mumonkanwoyomu.htm>

The Chinese and Japanese texts in this web site are taken from the book titled *Mumonkan*, published in Japan by *Iwanami Bunkō*.

Chinese Characters

Unfortunately a few Chinese characters were not given in this site. Luckily these characters are less than 1% of the text. Where there was a definition about these ideograms, they are entered them using Chinese system (Big 5). There are also ideograms that appear as mere black boxes, without any explanations. These are replaced with dummy characters (empty square boxes).

The Gateless Gate 無門關 Wu-wen kuan (Mumonkan)

Mumon's Preface

佛語心爲宗、無門爲法門。

Buddhism makes mind its foundation and no-gate its gate.

既是無門、且作麼生透。

Now, how do you pass through this no-gate?

豈不見道、從門入者不是家珍、從緣得者始終成壞。

It is said that things coming in through the gate can never be your own treasures.

What is gained from external circumstances will perish in the end.

恁麼說話、大似無風起浪好肉抉瘡。

However, such a saying is already raising waves when there is no wind. It is cutting unblemished skin.

何況滯言句覓解會。掉棒打月、隔靴爬痒、有甚交涉。

As for those who try to understand through other people's words, they are striking at the moon with a stick; scratching a shoe, whereas it is the foot that itches. What concern have they with the truth?

慧開、紹定戊子夏、首衆于東嘉龍翔。因納子請益、遂將古人公案作敲門瓦子、隨機引導學者。

In the summer of the first year of Jōtei, Ekai was in Ryūshō Temple and as head monk worked with the monks, using the cases of the ancient masters as brickbats to batter the gate and lead them on according to their respective capacities.

竟爾抄錄、不覺成集。初不以前後敘列、共成四十八則。

The text was written down not according to any scheme, but just to make a collection of forty-eight cases.

通曰無門關。

It is called *Mumonkan*, "The Gateless Gate."

若是箇漢、不顧危亡單刀直入。

A man of determination will unflinchingly push his way straight forward, regardless of all dangers.

八臂那吒、攔他不在。

Then even the eight-armed Nata cannot hinder him.

縱使西天四七、東土二三、只得望風乞命。

Even the four sevens of the West and the two threes of the East would beg for their lives.

設或躊躇、也似隔窓看馬騎、眨得眼來、早已蹉過。

If one has no determination, then it will be like catching a glimpse of a horse galloping past the window: in the twinkling of an eye it will be gone.

Verse 頌曰

大道無門	The Great Way is gateless,
千差有路	Approached in a thousand ways.
透得此關	Once past this checkpoint
乾坤獨步	You stride through the universe.

Case 1 Jōshū's "Mu"

一 趙州狗子

趙州和尚、因僧問、狗子還有佛性也無。州云、無。

A monk asked Jōshū, "Has a dog the Buddha Nature?" Jōshū answered, "Mu."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、參禪須透祖師關、妙悟要窮心路絕。

In order to master Zen, you must pass the barrier of the patriarchs. To attain this subtle realization, you must completely cut off the way of thinking.

祖關不透心路不絕、盡是依草附木精靈。

If you do not pass the barrier, and do not cut off the way of thinking, then you will be like a ghost clinging to the bushes and weeds.

且道、如何是祖師關。

Now, I want to ask you, what is the barrier of the patriarchs?

只者一箇無字、乃宗門一關也。

Why, it is this single word "Mu." That is the front gate to Zen.

遂目之曰禪宗無門關。

Therefore it is called the "Mumonkan of Zen."

透得過者、非但親見趙州、便可與歷代祖師把手共行、眉毛厮結同一眼見、同一耳聞。

If you pass through it, you will not only see Jōshū face to face, but you will also go hand in hand with the successive patriarchs, entangling your eyebrows with theirs, seeing with the same eyes, hearing with the same ears.

豈不慶快。

Isn't that a delightful prospect?

莫有要透關底麼。

Wouldn't you like to pass this barrier?

將三百六十骨節、八萬四千毫竅、通身起箇疑團參箇無字。

Arouse your entire body with its three hundred and sixty bones and joints and its eighty-four thousand pores of the skin; summon up a spirit of great doubt and concentrate on this word "Mu."

晝夜提撕、莫作虛無會、莫作有無會。

Carry it continuously day and night. Do not form a nihilistic conception of vacancy, or a relative conception of "has" or "has not."

如吞了箇熱鐵丸相似、吐又吐不出。

It will be just as if you swallow a red-hot iron ball, which you cannot spit out even if you try.

蕩盡從前惡知惡覺、久久純熟自然內外打成一片、如啞子得夢、只許自知。

All the illusory ideas and delusive thoughts accumulated up to the present will be exterminated, and when the time comes, internal and external will be spontaneously united. You will know this, but for yourself only, like a dumb man who has had a dream.

驀然打發、驚天動地。

Then all of a sudden an explosive conversion will occur, and you will astonish the heavens and shake the earth.

如奪得關將軍大刀入手、逢佛殺佛、逢祖殺祖、於生死岸頭得大自在、向六道四生中遊戲三昧。

It will be as if you snatch away the great sword of the valiant general Kan'u and hold it in your hand. When you meet the Buddha, you kill him; when you meet the patriarchs, you kill them. On the brink of life and death, you command perfect

freedom; among the sixfold worlds and four modes of existence, you enjoy a merry and playful samadhi.

且作麼生提撕。

Now, I want to ask you again, "How will you carry it out?"

盡平生氣力舉箇無字。

Employ every ounce of your energy to work on this "Mu."

若不間斷、好似法燭一點便著。

If you hold on without interruption, behold: a single spark, and the holy candle is lit!

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

狗子佛性 The dog, the Buddha Nature,

全提正令 The pronouncement, perfect and final.

纔涉有無 Before you say it has or has not,

喪身失命 You are a dead man on the spot.

Case 2 Hyakujō's Fox

二 百丈野狐

百丈和尚、凡參次、有一老人常隨衆聽法。

When Hyakujō Oshō delivered a certain series of sermons, an old man always followed the monks to the main hall and listened to him.

衆人退、老人亦退。

When the monks left the hall, the old man would also leave.

忽一日不退。師遂問、面前立者復是何人。

One day, however, he remained behind, and Hyakujō asked him, "Who are you, standing here before me?"

老人云、諾。

The old man replied.

某甲非人也。

"I am not a human being.

於過去迦葉佛時曾住此山。

In the old days of Kashyapa Buddha, I was a head monk, living here on this mountain.

因學人問、大修行底人還落因果也無。

One day a student asked me, 'Does a man of enlightenment fall under the yoke of causation or not?'

某甲對云、不落因果。

I answered, 'No, he does not.'

五百生墮野狐身。

Since then I have been doomed to undergo five hundred rebirths as a fox.

今請、和尚代一轉語貴脫野狐。

I beg you now to give the turning word to release me from my life as a fox.

遂問、大修行底人、還落因果也無。

Tell me, does a man of enlightenment fall under the yoke of causation or not?"

師云、不昧因果。

Hyakujō answered, "He does not ignore causation."

老人於言下大悟。

No sooner had the old man heard these words than he was enlightened.

作禮云、某甲、已脫野狐身住在山後。

Making his bows, he said, "I am emancipated from my life as a fox. I shall remain on this mountain.

敢告和尚。乞、依亡僧事例。

I have a favor to ask of you: would you please bury my body as that of a dead monk."

師、令維那白槌告衆、食後送亡僧。

Hyakujō had the director of the monks strike with the gavel and inform everyone that after the midday meal there would be a funeral service for a dead monk.

大衆言議、一衆皆安、涅槃堂又無人病。何故如是。

The monks wondered at this, saying, "Everyone is in good health; nobody is in the sick ward. What does this mean?"

食後只見師領衆至山後岳下、以杖挑出一死野狐、乃依火葬。

After the meal Hyakujō led the monks to the foot of a rock on the far side of the mountain and with his staff poked out the dead body of a fox and performed the ceremony of cremation.

師、至晚上堂、舉前因緣。

That evening he ascended the rostrum and told the monks the whole story.

黃蘗便問、古人錯祇對一轉語、墮五百生野狐身、轉轉不錯合作箇甚麼。

Ōbaku thereupon asked him, "The old man gave the wrong answer and was doomed to be a fox for five hundred rebirths. Now, suppose he had given the right answer, what would have happened then?"

師云、近前來與伊道。

Hyakujō said, "You come here to me, and I will tell you."

黃蘗遂近前、與師一掌。

Ōbaku went up to Hyakujō and boxed his ears.

師拍手笑云、將謂、胡鬚赤。更有赤鬚胡。

Hyakujō clapped his hands with a laugh and exclaimed, "I was thinking that the barbarian had a red beard, but now I see before me the red-bearded barbarian himself."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、不落因果、爲甚墮野狐。

Not falling under causation: how could this make the monk a fox?

不昧因果、爲甚脫野狐。

Not ignoring causation: how could this make the old man emancipated?

若向者裏著得一隻眼、便知得前百丈贏得風流五百生。

If you come to understand this, you will realize how old Hyakujō would have enjoyed five hundred rebirths as a fox.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

不落不昧 Not falling, not ignoring:

兩采一賽 Two faces of one die.

不昧不落 Not ignoring, not falling:

千錯萬錯 A thousand errors, a million mistakes.

Case 3 Gutei Raises a Finger

三 俱胝堅指

俱胝和尚、凡有詰問、唯舉一指。

Whenever Gutei Oshō was asked about Zen, he simply raised his finger.

後有童子。因外人問、和尚說何法要。

Once a visitor asked Gutei's boy attendant, "What does your master teach?"

童子亦堅指頭。

The boy too raised his finger.

胝聞遂以刃斷其指。

Hearing of this, Gutei cut off the boy's finger with a knife.

童子、負痛號哭而去。

The boy, screaming with pain, began to run away.

胝復召之。童子迴首。胝却 堅起指。

Gutei called to him, and when he turned around, Gutei raised his finger.

童子忽然領悟。

The boy suddenly became enlightened.

胝將順世、謂衆曰、吾得天龍一指頭禪、一生受用不盡。

When Gutei was about to pass away, he said to his assembled monks, "I obtained one-finger Zen from Tenryū and used it all my life but still did not exhaust it."

言訖示滅。

When he had finished saying this, he entered into eternal Nirvana.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、俱胝並童子悟處、不在指頭上。

The enlightenment of Gutei and of the boy does not depend on the finger.

若向者裏見得、天龍同俱胝並童子興自己一串穿却。

If you understand this, Tenryû, Gutei, the boy, and you yourself are all run through with one skewer.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

俱胝鈍置老天龍 Gutei made a fool of old Tenryû,
利刃單提勘小童 Emancipating the boy with a single slice,
巨靈擡手無多子 Just as Kyorei cleaved Mount Kasan
分破華山千萬重 To let the Yellow River run through.

Case 4 The Western Barbarian with No Beard

四 胡子無髭

或庵曰、西天胡子、因甚無髭。

Wakuan said, "Why has the Western Barbarian no beard?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、參須實參、悟須實悟。

Study should be real study, enlightenment should be real enlightenment.

者箇胡子、直須親見一回始得。

You should once meet this barbarian directly to be really intimate with him.

說親見、早成兩箇。

But saying you are really intimate with him already divides you into two.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

癡人面前 Don't discuss your dream
不可說夢 Before a fool.
胡子髭無 Barbarian with no beard
惺惺添□ Obscures the clarity.

Case 5 Kyôgen's "Man up in a Tree"

五 香巖上樹

香巖和尚云、如人上樹、口啣樹枝、手不攀枝、腳不踏樹。

Kyôgen Oshô said, "It is like a man up in a tree hanging from a branch with his mouth; his hands grasp no bough, his feet rest on no limb.

樹下有人問西來意、不對即違他所問、若對又喪身失命。

Someone appears under the tree and asks him, 'What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West?' If he does not answer, he fails to respond to the question. If he does answer, he will lose his life.

正恁麼時、作麼生對。

What would you do in such a situation?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、縱有懸河之辨、惣用不著。

Even if your eloquence flows like a river, it is of no avail.

說得一大藏教、亦用不著。

Though you can expound the whole of Buddhist literature, it is of no use.

若向者裏對得著、活却從前死路頭、死却從前活路頭。

If you solve this problem, you will give life to the way that has been dead until this moment and destroy the way that has been alive up to now.

其或未然、直待當來問彌勒。

Otherwise you must wait for Maitreya Buddha and ask him.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

香嚴真杜撰 Kyōgen is truly thoughtless;

惡毒無盡限 His vice and poison are endless.

啞却納僧口 He stops up the mouths of the monks,

通身迸鬼眼 And devil's eyes sprout from their bodies.

Case 6 The Buddha Holds Out a Flower

六 世尊拈花

世尊、昔、在靈山會上拈花示衆。

When Shakyamuni Buddha was at Mount Grdhrakuta, he held out a flower to his listeners.

是時、衆皆默然。

Everyone was silent.

惟迦葉者破顏微笑。

Only Mahakashyapa broke into a broad smile.

世尊云、吾有正方眼藏、涅槃妙心、實相無相、微妙法門、不立文字、教外別傳、付囑摩訶迦葉。

The Buddha said, "I have the True Dharma Eye, the Marvelous Mind of Nirvana, the True Form of the Formless, and the Subtle Dharma Gate, independent of words and transmitted beyond doctrine. This I have entrusted to Mahakashyapa."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、黃面瞿曇、傍若無人。

Golden-faced Gautama really disregarded his listeners.

壓良爲賤、縣羊頭賣狗肉。

He made the good look bad and sold dog's meat labeled as mutton.

將謂、多少奇特。

He himself thought it was wonderful.

只如當時大眾都笑、正方眼藏、作麼生傳。

If, however, everyone in the audience had laughed, how could he have transmitted his True Eye?

設使迦葉不笑、正方眼藏又作麼生傳。

And again, if Mahakashyapa had not smiled, how could the Buddha have transmitted it?

若道正方眼藏有傳授、黃面老子、誑□閭閻。

If you say the True Dharma Eye can be transmitted, then the golden-faced old man would be a city slicker who cheats the country bumpkin.

若道無傳授、爲甚麼獨許迦葉。

If you say it cannot be transmitted, then why did the Buddha approve of Mahakashyapa?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

拈起花來 Holding out a flower,

尾巴已露 The Buddha betrayed his curly tail.

迦葉破顏 Heaven and earth were bewildered,

人天罔措 At Mahakashyapa's smile.

Case 7 Jōshū's "Wash Your Bowl"

七 趙州洗鉢

趙州、因僧問、其甲乍入叢林。

A monk said to Jōshū, "I have just entered this monastery.

乞師指示。

Please teach me."

州云、喫粥了也未。

"Have you eaten your rice porridge?" asked Jōshū.

僧云、喫粥了也。

"Yes, I have," replied the monk.

州云、洗鉢盂去。

"Then you had better wash your bowl," said Jōshū.

其僧有省。

With this the monk gained insight.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、趙州開口見膽、露出心肝。

When he opens his mouth, Jōshū shows his gallbladder. He displays his heart and liver.

者僧聽事不真、喚鐘作甕。

I wonder if this monk really did hear the truth. I hope he did not mistake the bell for a jar.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

只爲分明極 Endeavoring to interpret clearly,
翻令所得遲 You retard your attainment.
早知燈是火 Don't you know that flame is fire?
飯熟已多時 Your rice has long been cooked.

Case 8 Keichû the Wheelmaker

八 奚仲造車

月庵和尚問僧、奚仲造車一百輻。

Gettan Oshô said, "Keichû, the first wheelmaker, made a cart whose wheels had a hundred spokes.

拈却兩頭、去却輻、明甚麼邊事。

Now, suppose you took a cart and removed both the wheels and the axle. What would you have?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若也直下明得、眼、似流星、機、如掣電。

If anyone can directly master this topic, his eye will be like a shooting star, his spirit like a flash of lightning.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

機輪轉處 When the spiritual wheels turn,
達者猶迷 Even the master fails to follow them.
四維上下 They travel in all directions, above and below,
南北東西 North, south, east, and west.

Case 9 Daitsû Chishô Buddha

九 大通智勝

興陽讓和尚、因僧問、大通智勝佛、十劫坐道場、佛法不現前、不得成佛道時如何。

A monk asked Kôyô Seijô, "Daitsû Chishô Buddha sat in zazen for ten *kalpas* and could not attain Buddhahood. He did not become a Buddha. How could this be?"

讓曰、其問甚諦當。

Seijô said, "Your question is quite self-explanatory."

僧云、既是坐道場、爲甚麼不得成佛道。

The monk asked, "He meditated so long; why could he not attain Buddhahood?"

讓曰、爲伊不成佛。

Seijō said, "Because he did not become a Buddha."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、只許老胡知、不許老胡會。

I allow the barbarian's realization, but I do not allow his understanding.

凡夫若知、既是聖人。

When an ignorant man realizes it, he is a sage.

聖人若會、既是凡夫。

When a sage understands it, he is ignorant.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

了身何似了心休 Better emancipate your mind than your body;

了得心□身不愁 When the mind is emancipated, the body is free,

若也身心俱了了 When both body and mind are emancipated,

神仙何必更封侯 Even gods and spirits ignore worldly power.

Case 10 Seizei Is Utterly Destitute

十 清稅孤貧

曹山和尚、因僧問云、清稅孤貧。

Seizei said to Sōzan, "Seizei is utterly destitute.

乞、師賑濟。

Will you give him support?"

山云、稅闍梨。

Sōzan called out, "Seizei!"

稅、應諾。

Seizei responded, "Yes, sir!"

山曰、青原白家酒、三盞喫了、猶道未沾唇。

Sōzan said, "You have finished three cups of the finest wine in China, and still you say you have not yet moistened your lips!"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、清稅輸機、是何心行。

Seizei pretended to retreat. What was his scheme?

曹山具眼、深辨來機。

Sōzan had the eye of Buddha and saw through his opponent's motive.

然雖如是、且道、那裏是稅闍梨、喫酒處。

However, I want to ask you, at what point did Seizei drink wine?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

貧似范丹 Poverty like Hantan's,

氣如項羽 Mind like Kōu's;
活計雖無 With no means of livelihood,
敢與鬪富 He dares to rival the richest.

Case 11 Jōshū Sees the Hermits

十一 州勘庵主

趙州、到一庵主處問、有麼有麼。

Jōshū went to a hermit's cottage and asked, "Is the master in? Is the master in?"

主、堅起拳頭。

The hermit raised his fist.

州云、水淺不是泊 處。便行。

Jōshū said, "The water is too shallow to anchor here," and he went away.

又到一庵主處云、有麼有麼。

Coming to another hermit's cottage, he asked again, "Is the master in? Is the master in?"

主亦堅起拳頭。

This hermit, too, raised his fist.

州云、能縱能奪、能殺能活。便作禮。

Jōshū said, "Free to give, free to take, free to kill, free to save," and he made a deep bow.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、一般堅起拳頭、爲甚麼肯一箇、不肯一箇。

Both raised their fists; why was the one accepted and the other rejected?

且道、□訛在甚麼處。

Tell me, what is the difficulty here?

若向者裏下得一轉語、便見趙州舌頭無骨、扶起放倒、得大自在。

If you can give a turning word to clarify this problem, you will realize that Jōshū's tongue has no bone in it, now helping others up, now knocking them down, with perfect freedom.

雖然如是爭奈、趙州却被二庵主勘破。

However, I must remind you: the two hermits could also see through Jōshū.

若道二庵主有優劣、未具參學眼。

If you say there is anything to choose between the two hermits, you have no eye of realization.

若道無優劣、亦未具參 學眼。

If you say there is no choice between the two, you have no eye of realization.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

眼流星 The eye like a shooting star,

機掣電 The spirit like a lighting;
殺人刀 A death-dealing blade,
活人劍 A life-giving sword.

Case 12 Zuigan Calls His Master

十二 巖喚主人

瑞巖彦和尚、每日自喚主人公、復自應諾。

Zuigan Gen Oshō called to himself every day, "Master!" and answered, "Yes, sir!"

乃云、惺惺着。□。

Then he would say, "Be wide awake!" and answer, "Yes, sir!"

他時異日、莫受人瞞。□□。

"Henceforward, never be deceived by others!" "No, I won't!"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、瑞巖老子、自買自賣、弄出許多神頭鬼面。

Old Zuigan buys and sells himself. He takes out a lot of god-masks and devil-masks and puts them on and plays with them.

何故。

What for, eh?

□。一箇喚底、一箇應底。一箇惺惺底、一箇不受人瞞底。

One calling and the other answering; one wide awake, the other saying he will never be deceived.

認着依前還不是。

If you stick to any of them, you will be a failure.

若也倣他、惣是野狐見解。

If you imitate Zuigan, you will play the fox.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

學道之人不識真 Clinging to the deluded way of consciousness,

只爲從前認識神 Students of the Way do not realize truth.

無量劫來生死本 The seed of birth and death through endless eons:

癡人喚作本來人 The fool calls it the true original self.

Case 13 Tokusan Holds His Bowls

十三 德山托鉢

德山、一日托鉢下堂。

One day Tokusan went down toward the dining room, holding his bowls.

見雪峰問者老漢鐘未鳴鼓未響、托鉢向甚處去、山便回方丈。

Seppō met him and asked, "Where are you off to with your bowls? The bell has not rung, and the drum has not sounded." Tokusan turned and went back to his room.

峰舉似巖頭。頭云、大小德山未會末後句。

Seppō mentioned this to Gantō, who remarked, "Tokusan is renowned, but he does not know the last word."

山聞令侍者喚巖頭來、問曰、汝不肯老僧那。

Tokusan heard about this remark and sent his attendant to fetch Gantō. "You do not approve of me?" he asked.

巖頭密啓其意。

Gantō whispered his meaning.

山乃休去。明日陞座、果與尋常不同。

Tokusan said nothing at the time, but the next day he ascended the rostrum, and behold! he was very different from usual!

巖頭至僧堂前、拊掌大笑云、且喜得老漢會末後句。

Gantō, going toward the front of the hall, clapped his hands and laughed loudly, saying, "Congratulations! Our old man has got hold of the last word!"

他後天下人、不奈伊何。

From now on, nobody in this whole country can outdo him!"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若是末後句、巖頭德山俱未夢見在。

As for the last word, neither Gantō nor Tokusan has ever dreamed of it!

點將來、好似一棚傀儡。

When you look into the matter, you find they are like puppets on the shelf!

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

識得最初句 If you realize the first,

便會末後句 You master the last.

末後與最初 The first and the last

不是者一句 Are not one word.

Case 14 Nansen Cuts the Cat in Two

十四 南泉斬猫

南泉和尚因東西堂爭猫兒。

Nansen Oshō saw monks of the Eastern and Western halls quarreling over a cat.

泉乃提起云、大衆道得即救、道不得即斬却也。

He held up the cat and said, "If you can give an answer, you will save the cat. If not, I will kill it."

衆無對。泉遂斬之。

No one could answer, and Nansen cut the cat in two.

晚趙州外歸。泉舉似州。

That evening Jōshū returned, and Nansen told him of the incident.

州乃脱履安頭上而出。

Jōshū took off his sandal, placed it on his head, and walked out.

泉云、子若在即救得猫兒。

"If you had been there, you would have saved the cat," Nansen remarked.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、且道、趙州頂草鞋意作麼生。

Tell me, what did Jōshū mean when he put the sandal on his head?

若向者裏下得一轉語、便見南泉令不虛行。

If you can give a turning word on this, you will see that Nansen's decree was carried out with good reason.

其或未然險。

If not, "Danger!"

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

趙州若在 Had Jōshū been there,

倒行此令 He would have done the opposite;

奪却刀子 When the sword is snatched away,

南泉乞命 Even Nansen begs for his life.

Case 15 Tōzan's Sixty Blows

十五 洞山三頓

雲門、因洞山參次、門問曰、近離甚處。

Tōzan came to study with Unmon. Unmon asked, "Where are you from?"

山云、查渡。

"From Sato," Tōzan replied.

門曰、夏在甚處。

"Where were you during the summer?"

山云、湖南報慈。

"Well, I was at the monastery of Hōzu, south of the lake."

門曰、幾時離彼。

"When did you leave there," Unmon asked.

山云、八月二十五。

"On August 25" was Tōzan's reply.

門曰、放汝三頓棒。

"I spare you sixty blows," Unmon said.

山至明日却上問訊。

昨日蒙和尚放三頓棒。

The next day Tōzan came to Unmon and said, "Yesterday you said you spared me sixty blows."

不知過在甚麼處。

I beg to ask you, where was I at fault?"

門曰、飯袋子、江西湖南便恁麼去。

"Oh, you rice bag!" shouted Unmon. "What makes you wander about, now west of the river, now south of the lake?"

山於此大悟。

Tōzan thereupon came to a mighty enlightenment experience.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、雲門、當時便與本分草料、使洞山別有生機一路、家門不致寂寥。

If Unmon had given Tōzan the true food of Zen and encouraged him to develop an active Zen spirit, his school would not have declined as it did.

一夜在是非海裏著到、直待天明再來、又與他注破。

Tōzan had an agonizing struggle through the whole night, lost in the sea of right and wrong. He reached a complete impasse. After waiting for the dawn, he again went to Unmon, and Unmon again made him a picture book of Zen.

洞山直下悟去、未是性燥。

Even though he was directly enlightened, Tōzan could not be called brilliant.

且問諸人、洞山三頓棒、合喫不合喫。

Now, I want to ask you, should Tōzan have been given sixty blows or not?

若道合喫、草木叢林皆合喫棒。

If you say yes, you admit that all the universe should be beaten.

若道不合喫、雲門又成誑語。

If you say no, then you accuse Unmon of telling a lie.

向者裏明得、方與洞山出一口氣。

If you really understand the secret, you will be able to breathe out Zen spirit with the very mouth of Tōzan.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

獅子教兒迷子訣 The lion had a secret to puzzle his cub;

擬前跳躑早翻身 The cub crouched, leaped, and dashed forward.

無端再敍當頭著 The second time, a casual move led to checkmate.

前箭猶輕後箭深 The first arrow was light, but the second went deep.

Case 16 When the Bell Sounds

十六 鐘聲七條

雲門曰、世界恁麼廣闊。

Unmon said, "The world is vast and wide.

因甚向鐘聲裏披七條。

Why do you put on your seven-piece robe at the sound of the bell?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、大凡參禪學道、切忌、隨聲遂色。

In studying Zen, you should not be swayed by sounds and forms.

縱使聞聲悟道、見色明心也是尋常。

Even though you attain insight when hearing a voice or seeing a form, this is simply the ordinary way of things.

殊不知、納僧家、騎聲蓋色、頭頭上明、著著上妙。

Don't you know that the real Zen student commands sounds, controls forms, is clear-sighted at every event and free on every occasion?

然雖如是。且道、聲來耳畔、耳往聲邊。

Granted you are free, just tell me: Does the sound come to the ear or does the ear go to the sound?

直饒響寂雙忘、到此如何話會。

If both sound and silence die away, at such a juncture how could you talk of Zen?

若將耳聽應難會、眼處聞聲方始親。

While listening with you ear, you cannot tell. When hearing with your eye, you are truly intimate.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

會則事同一家	With realization, things make one family;
不會萬別千差	Without realization, things are separated in a thousand ways.
不會事同一家	Without realization, things make one family;
會則萬別千差	With realization, things are separated in a thousand ways.

Case 17 Chû the National Teacher Gives Three Calls

十七 國師

三喚

國師三喚侍者。侍者三應。

The National Teacher called his attendant three times, and three times the attendant responded.

國師云、將謂吾辜負汝、元來却是汝辜負吾。

The National Teacher said, "I long feared that I was betraying you, but really it was you who were betraying me."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、國師三喚、舌頭墮地。

The National Teacher called three times, and his tongue fell to the ground.

侍者三應、和光吐出。

The attendant responded three times, and he gave his answer with brilliance.

國師年老心孤、按牛頭喫草。

The National Teacher was old and lonely; he held the cow's head and forced it to eat grass.

侍者未肯承當。

The attendant would have none of it;

美食不中飽人□、且道、那裏是他辜負處。

delicious food has little attraction for a man who is satiated. Tell me, at what point was the betrayal?

國淨才子貴、家富小兒嬌。

When the country is flourishing, talent is prized. When the home is wealthy, the children are proud.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

鐵枷無孔要人擔 He carried an iron yoke with no hole

累及兒孫不等閑 And left a curse to trouble his descendants.

欲得□門并□戶 If you want to hold up the gate and the doors,

更須赤脚上刀山 You must climb a mountain of swords with bare feet.

Case 18 Tōzan's "Masagin"

十八 洞山三斤

洞山和尚、因僧問、如何是佛。

A monk asked Tōzan, "What is Buddha?"

山云、麻三斤。

Tōzan replied, "Masagin!" [three pounds of flax].

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、洞山老人、參得些蚌蛤禪、纔開兩片露出肝腸。

Old Tōzan attained the poor Zen of a clam. He opened the two halves of the shell a little and exposed all the liver and intestines inside.

然雖如是、且道、向甚處見洞山。

But tell me, how do you see Tōzan?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

突出麻三斤 "Three pounds of flax" came sweeping along;

言親意更親 Close were the words, but closer was the meaning.

來說是非者 Those who argue about right and wrong

便是是非人 Are those enslaved by right and wrong.

Case 19 Nansen's "Ordinary Mind Is the Way"

十九 平常是道

南泉、因趙州問、如何是道。

Jōshū asked Nansen, "What is the Way?"

泉云、平常心是道。

"Ordinary mind is the Way," Nansen replied.

州云、還可趣向否。

"Shall I try to seek after it?" Jōshū asked.

泉云、擬向即乖。

"If you try for it, you will become separated from it," responded Nansen.

州云、不擬爭知是道。

"How can I know the Way unless I try for it?" persisted Jōshū.

泉云、道不屬知、不屬不知。

Nansen said, "The Way is not a matter of knowing or not knowing.

知是妄覺、不知是無記。

Knowing is delusion; not knowing is confusion.

若真達不擬之道、猶如太虛廓然洞豁。

When you have really reached the true Way beyond doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as outer space.

豈可強是非也。

How can it be talked about on the level of right and wrong?"

州於言下頓悟。

With these words, Jōshū came to a sudden realization.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、南泉被趙州發問、直得瓦解冰消、分疎不下。

Nansen dissolved and melted away before Jōshū's question, and could not offer a plausible explanation.

趙州縱饒悟去、更參三十年始得。

Even though Jōshū comes to a realization, he must delve into it for another thirty years before he can fully understand it.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

春有百花秋有月 The spring flowers, the autumn moon;

夏有涼風冬有雪 Summer breezes, winter snow.

若無閑事挂心頭 If useless things do not clutter your mind,

更是人間好時節 You have the best days of your life.

Case 20 The Man of Great Strength

二十 大力量人

松源和尚云、大力量人、因甚擡脚不起。

Shōgen Oshō asked, "Why is it that a man of great strength does not lift his legs?"

又云、開口不在舌頭上。

And he also said, "It is not the tongue he speaks with."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、松源可謂、傾腸倒腹。

It must be said that Shōgen shows us all his stomach and intestines.

只是欠人承當。

But alas, no one can appreciate him!

縱饒直下承當、正好來無門處喫痛棒。

And even if someone could appreciate him, let him come to me, and I'll beat him severely.

何故。

Why?

□。要識真金、火裏看。

If you want to find pure gold, you must see it through fire.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

擡腳踏翻香水海 Lifting his leg, he kicks up the Scented Ocean;

低頭俯視四禪天 Lowering his head, he looks down on the fourth Dhyana heaven.

一箇渾身無處著請 There is no space vast enough for his body—

續一句 Now, somebody write the last line here.

Case 21 Unmon's "Kanshiketsu"

二十一 雲門屎

雲門、因僧問、如何是佛。

A monk asked Unmon, "What is Buddha?"

門云、乾屎。

Unmon replied, "Kanshiketsu!" [A dry shit-stick.]

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、雲門可謂、家貧難辦素食、事忙不及草書。

Unmon was too poor to prepare plain food, too busy to speak from notes.

動便將屎來、□門挂戶。

He hurriedly took up *shiketsu* to support the Way.

佛法興衰可見。

The decline of Buddhism was thus foreshadowed.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

閃電光 Lightning flashing,

擊石化 Sparks shooting;
眨得眼 A moment's blinking,
已蹉過 Missed forever.

Case 22 Kashyapa's "Knock Down the Flagpole"

二十二 迦葉刹竿

迦葉、因阿難問云、世尊傳金襴袈裟外、別傳何物。

Ananda asked Kashyapa, "The World-honored One gave you the golden robe; did he give you anything else?"

葉喚云、阿難。

"Ananda!" cried Kashyapa.

難、應諾。

"Yes, sir!" answered Ananda.

葉云、倒却門前刹竿著。

"Knock down the flagpole at the gate," said Kashyapa.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若向者裏下得一轉語親切、便見靈山一會儼然未散。

If you can give a turning word at this point, you will see that the meeting at Mount Grdhrakuta is still solemnly continuing.

其或未然、毘婆尸佛、早留心、直至而今不得妙。

If not, then this is what Vipasyin Buddha worried about from remote ages; up to now he has still not acquired the essence.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

問處何如答處親 Tell me—question or answer—which was more intimate?

幾人於此眼生筋 Many have knit their brows over this;

兄呼弟鷹揚家醜 Elder brother calls, younger brother answers, and they betray the family secret.

不屬陰陽別是春 They had a special spring, not one of yin and yang.

Case 23 Think Neither Good Nor Evil

二十三 不思善惡

六祖、因明上座、趁至大嶺。

The Sixth Patriarch was pursued by the monk Myō as far as Taiyu Mountain.

祖見明至、即擲衣鉢於石上云、此衣表信。可力爭耶、任君將去。

The patriarch, seeing Myō coming, laid the robe and bowl on a rock and said, "This robe represents the faith; it should not be fought over. If you want to take it away, take it now."

明遂舉之如山不動、跣□悚慄。明白、我來求法、非爲衣也。

Myō tried to move it, but it was as heavy as a mountain and would not budge. Faltering and trembling, he cried out, "I came for the Dharma, not for the robe.

願行者開示。

I beg you, please give me your instruction."

祖云、不思善、不思惡、正與麼時、那箇是明上座本來面目。

The patriarch said, "Think neither good nor evil. At this very moment, what is the original self of the monk Myō?"

明當下大悟、遍體汗流。

At these words, Myō was directly illuminated. His whole body was covered with sweat.

泣淚作禮、問曰、上來密語密意外、還更 有意旨否。

He wept and bowed, saying, "Besides the secret words and the secret meaning you have just now revealed to me, is there anything else, deeper still?"

祖曰、我今爲汝說者、即非密也。

The patriarch said, "What I have told you is no secret at all.

汝若返照自己面目、密却在汝邊。

When you look into your own true self, whatever is deeper is found right there."

明云、其申雖在黃梅隨衆、實未省自己面目。

Myō said, "I was with the monks under Ōbai for many years but I could not realize my true self.

今蒙指授入處、如人飲水冷暖自知。

But now, receiving your instruction, I know it is like a man drinking water and knowing whether it is cold or warm.

今行者即是某甲師也。

My lay brother, you are now my teacher."

祖云、汝若如是則吾與汝同師黃梅。

The patriarch said, "If you say so, but let us both call Ōbai our teacher.

善自護持。

Be mindful to treasure and hold fast to what you have attained."

Mumon's Comment

無問曰、六祖可謂、是事出急家老婆心切。

The Sixth Patriarch was, so to speak, hurried into helping a man in an emergency, and he displayed a grandmotherly kindness.

譬如新荔支剥了殼去了核、送在 口裏、只要 嚥一嚥。

It is as though he peeled a fresh lichi, removed the seed, put it in your mouth, and asked you to swallow it down.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

描不成兮畫不就 You cannot describe it; you cannot picture it;

贊不及兮休生受 You cannot admire it; don't try to eat it raw.

本來面目沒處藏 Your true self has nowhere to hide;
世界壞時渠不朽 When the world is destroyed, it is not destroyed.

Case 24 Fuketsu's Speech and Silence

二十四 離却語言

風穴和尚、因僧問、語默涉離微、如何通不犯。

A monk asked Fuketsu, "Both speech and silence are faulty in being *ri* [離 inward action of mind] or *bi* [微 outward action of mind]. How can we escape these faults?"

穴云、長憶江南三月裏、鷓鴣啼處百花香。

Fuketsu said,

"I always remember the spring in Kōnan,
Where the partridges sing;
How fragrant the countless flowers!"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、風穴機如掣電得路便行。

Fuketsu's Zen spirit was like lightning and opened a clear passage.

爭奈坐前人舌頭不斷。

However, he was entangled in the monk's words and could not cut them off.

若向者裏見得親切、自有出身之路。

If you can really grasp the problem, you can readily find the way out.

且離却語言三昧、道將一句來。

Now, putting language samadhi aside, say it in your own words.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

不露風骨句 He does not use a refined phrase;

未語先分付 Before speaking, he has already handed it over.

進步口喃喃 If you chatter on and on,

知君大罔措 You will find you have lost your way.

Case 25 Kyōzan's Dream

二十五 三座說法

仰山和尚、夢見往彌勒所、安第三座。

In a dream Kyōzan Oshō went to Maitreya's place and was led in to sit in the third seat.

有一尊者、白槌云、今日當第三座說法。

A senior monk struck with a gavel and said, "Today the one in the third seat will speak."

山乃起白槌云、摩訶衍法離四句、絕百非。

Kyōzan rose and, striking with the gavel, said, "The truth of Mahayana is beyond the four propositions and transcends the hundred negations.

諦聽、諦聽。

Taichō! Taichō!" [Hear the truth!]

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、且道、是說法不說法、開口即失、閉口又喪。

Now tell me, did Kyōzan preach or did he not not? If he opens his mouth, he is lost; if he seals his mouth, he is lost.

不開不閉、十萬八千。

Even if he neither opens nor shuts his mouth, he is a hundred and eight thousand [miles away from the truth].

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

白日晴天	In broad daylight, under the blue sky,
夢中說夢	He forges a dream in a dream;
捏怪捏怪	He makes up a monstrous story
誑□一衆	And tries to deceive the whole crowd.

Case 26 Two Monks Roll Up the Blinds

二十六 二僧卷簾

清涼大法眼、因僧齋前上參。眼以手指簾。

When the monks assembled before the midday meal to listen to his lecture, the great Hōgen of Seiryō pointed at the bamboo blinds.

時有二僧、同去卷簾。

Two monks simultaneously went and rolled them up.

眼曰、一得一失。

Hōgen said, "One gain, one loss."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、且道、是誰得誰失。

Tell me, who gained and who lost?

若向者裏著得一隻眼、便知清涼國師敗闕處。

If you have an eye to penetrate the secret, you will see where Seiryō Kokushi failed.

然雖如是、切忌向得失裏商量。

However, I warn you strongly against discussing gain and loss.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

卷起明明徹太空 Rolling up the blinds, the great sky is open,

太空猶未合吾宗 But the great sky does not come up to Zen.
爭似從空都放下 Why don't you throw them all down from the sky,
綿綿密密不通風 And keep your practice so close that no air can escape?

Case 27 Nansen's "Not Mind, Not Buddha, Not Things"

二十七 不是

心佛

南泉和尚、因僧問云、還有不與人說底法麼。

A monk asked Nansen, "Is there any Dharma that has not been preached to the people?"

泉云、有。

Nansen answered, "There is."

僧云、如何是不與人說底法。

"What is the truth that has not been taught?" asked the monk.

泉云、不是心、不是佛、不是物。

Nansen said, "It is not mind; it is not Buddha; it is not things."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、南泉被者一問、直得搥盡家私、郎當不少。

At this question, Nansen used up all his treasure and was not a little confused.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

叮嚀損君德 Talking too much spoils your virtue;

無言真有功 Silence is truly unequaled.

任從滄海變 Let the mountains become the sea;

終不爲君通 I'll give you no comment.

Case 28 Ryûtan Blows Out the Candle

二十八 久嚮龍潭

龍潭、因德山請益抵夜。

Tokusan asked Ryûtan about Zen far into the night.

潭云、夜深。

At last Ryûtan said, "The night is late.

子何不下去。

Why don't you retire?"

山遂珍重揭簾而出。見外面黑却回云、外面黑。

Tokusan made his bows and lifted the blinds to withdraw, but he was met by darkness. Turning back to Ryûtan, he said, "It is dark outside."

潭乃點紙燭度與。

Ryûtan lit a paper candle and handed it to him.

山擬接。潭便吹滅。

Tokusan was about to take it when Ryûtan blew it out.

山於此忽然有省。便作禮。

At this, all of a sudden, Tokusan went through a deep experience and made bows.

潭云、子見箇甚麼道理。

Ryûtan said, "What sort of realization do you have?"

山云、某甲從今日去不疑天下老和尚舌頭也。

"From now on," said Tokusan, "I will not doubt the words of an old oshô who is renowned everywhere under the sun."

至明日、龍潭陞堂云、可中有箇漢、牙如劍樹、口似血盆。

The next day Ryûtan ascended the rostrum and said, "I see a fellow among you. His fangs are like the sword tree. His mouth is like a blood bowl.

一棒打不回頭。

Strike him with a stick, and he won't turn his head to look at you.

他時異日、向孤峰頂上立君道在。

Someday or other, he will climb the highest of the peaks and establish our Way there."

山遂取疏抄於法堂前、將一炬火提起云、窮諸玄辨、若一毫致於太虛、竭世樞機似一滴投於巨壑。

Tokusan brought his notes on the *Diamond Sutra* to the front of the hall, pointed to them with a torch, and said, "Even though you have exhausted the abstruse doctrines, it is like placing a hair in a vast space. Even though you have learned all the secrets of the world, it is like a drop of water dripped on the great ocean."

將疏抄便燒。

And he burned all his notes.

於是禮辭。

Then, making bows, he took his leave of his teacher.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、德山未出關時、心憤憤、口□□、得得來南方要滅却教外別傳之旨。

Before Tokusan crossed the barrier from his native place, his mind burned and his mouth uttered bitterness. He went southward, intending to stamp out the doctrines of special transmission outside the sutras.

及到 州路上問婆子買點心。

When he reached the road to Reishû, he asked an old woman to let him have lunch to "refresh the mind."

婆云、大德車子內是甚麼文字。

"Your worship, what sort of literature do you carry in your pack?" the old woman asked.

山云、金剛經疏抄。

"Commentaries on the *Diamond Sutra*," replied Tokusan.

婆云、只如經中道、過去心不可得、見在心不可得、未來心不可得。

The old woman said, "I hear it is said in that sutra, 'The past mind cannot be held, the present mind cannot be held, the future mind cannot be held.'"

大德、要點那箇心。

Now, I would like to ask you, what mind are you going to have refreshed?"

德山被者一問、直得口似□檐。

At this question Tokusan was dumbfounded.

然雖如是、未肯向婆子句下死却。遂問婆子、近處有甚麼宗師。

However, he did not remain inert under her words but asked, "Do you know of any good teacher around here?"

婆云、五里外有龍潭和尚。

The old woman said, "Five miles from here you will find Ryûtan Oshô."

及到龍潭納盡敗闕。

Coming to Ryûtan, Tokusan got the worst of it.

可謂是前言不應後語。

His former words were inconsistent with his later ones.

龍潭大似憐兒不覺醜。

As for Ryûtan, he seemed to have lost all sense of shame in his compassion toward his son.

見他有些子火種、郎忙將惡水驀頭一澆澆殺。

Finding a bit of live coal in the other, enough to start a fire, he hurriedly poured on muddy water to annihilate everything at once.

冷地看來、一場好笑。

A little cool reflection tells us it was all a farce.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

聞名不如見面 Hearing the name cannot surpass seeing the face;

見面不如聞名 Seeing the face cannot surpass hearing the name.

雖然救得鼻孔 He may have saved his nose,

爭奈瞎却眼睛 But alas! he lost his eyes.

Case 29 The Sixth Patriarch's "Your Mind Moves"

二十九 非風非幡

六祖、因風 剎幡。有二僧、對論。

The wind was flapping a temple flag, and two monks started an argument.

一云、幡動。一云、風動。

One said the flag moved, the other said the wind moved;

往復曾未契理。

they argued back and forth but could not reach a conclusion.

祖云、不是風動、不是幡動、仁者心動。

The Sixth Patriarch said, "It is not the wind that moves, it is not the flag that moves; it is your mind that moves."

二僧悚然。

The two monks were awe-struck.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、不是風動、不是幡動、不是心動、甚處見祖師。

It is not the wind that moves; it is not the flag that moves; it is not the mind that moves. How do you see the patriarch?

若向者裏見得親切、方知二僧買鐵得金。

If you come to understand this matter deeply, you will see that the two monks got gold when buying iron.

祖師忍俊不禁、一場漏逗。

The patriarch could not withhold his compassion and courted disgrace.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

風幡心動 Wind, flag, mind, moving,

一狀領過 All equally to blame.

只知開口 Only knowing how to open his mouth,

不覺話墮 Unaware of his fault in talking.

Case 30 Baso's "This Very Mind Is the Buddha"

三十 即心即佛

馬祖、因大梅問、如何是佛。

Daibai asked Baso, "What is the Buddha?"

祖云、即心是佛。

Baso answered, "This very mind is the Buddha."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若能直下領略得去、著佛衣、喫佛飯、說佛話、行佛行、即是佛也。

If you directly grasp Baso's meaning, you wear the Buddha's clothes, eat the Buddha's food, speak the Buddha's words, do the Buddha's deeds—that is, you are a Buddha himself.

然雖如是、大梅引多少人、錯認定盤星。

However, alas! Daibai misled not a few people into taking the mark on the balance for the weight itself.

爭知道說箇佛字、三日漱口。

How could he realize that even mentioning the word "Buddha" should make us rinse out our mouths for three days?

若是箇漢、見說即心是佛、掩耳便走。

If a man of understanding hears anyone say, "This very mind is the Buddha," he will cover his ears and rush away.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

青天白日 The blue sky and bright day,

切忌尋覓 No more searching around!

更問如何 "What is the Buddha?" you ask:

抱贓叫屈 With loot in your pocket, you declare yourself innocent.

Case 31 Jōshū Investigates an Old Woman

三十一 趙州勘婆

趙州、因僧問婆子、臺山路向甚處去。

A monk asked an old woman, "What is the way to Taisan?"

婆云、驀直去。

The old woman said, "Go straight on."

僧纔行三五步。婆云、好箇師僧、又恁麼去。

When the monk had proceeded a few steps, she said, "A good, respectable monk, but he too goes that way."

後有僧舉似州。

Afterward someone told Jōshū about this.

州云、待我去與 勘過這婆子。

Jōshū said, "Wait a bit, I will go and investigate the old woman for you."

明日便去亦如是問。婆亦如是答。

The next day he went and asked the same question, and the old woman gave the same answer.

州歸謂衆曰、臺山婆子、我與□勘破了也。

On returning, Jōshū said to his disciples, "I have investigated the old woman of Taisan for you."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、婆子只解坐籌帷幄、要且著賊不知。

The old woman only knew how to sit still in her tent and plan the campaign; she did not know when she was shadowed by a spy.

趙州老人、善用偷營劫寨乃機、又且無大人相。

Though old Jōshū showed himself clever enough to take a camp and overwhelm a fortress, he displayed no trace of being a great commander.

點將來、二俱有過。

If we look at them, they both have their faults.

且道、那裏是趙州、勘破婆子處。

But tell me, what did Jōshū see in the old woman?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

問既一般 The question was like the others,
答亦相似 The answer was the same.
飯裏有砂 Sand in the rice,
泥中有刺 Thorns in the mud.

Case 32 A Non-Buddhist Philosopher Questions the Buddha

三十二

外道問佛

世尊、因外道問、不問有言、不問無言。

A non-Buddhist philosopher said to the Buddha, "I do not ask for words; I don not ask for non-words."

世尊據座。

The Buddha just sat there.

外道贊歎云、世尊大慈大悲、開我迷雲令我得入。

The philosopher said admiringly, "The World-honored One, with his great mercy, has blown away the clouds of my illusion and enabled me to enter the Way."

乃具禮而去。

And after making bows, he took his leave.

阿難尋問佛、外道有何所證贊歎而去。

Then Ananda asked the Buddha, "What did he realize, to admire you so much?"

世尊云、如世良馬見鞭影而行。

The World-honored One replied, "A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、阿難乃佛弟子、宛不如外道見解、且道、外道與佛弟子相去多少。

Ananda was the Buddha's disciple, but his understanding was not equal to that of the non-Buddhist. I want to ask you, what difference is there between the Buddha's disciple and the non-Buddhist?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

劍刃上行 On the edge of a sword,
冰綾上走 Over the ridge of an iceberg,
不涉階梯 With no steps, no ladders,
懸崖撒手 Climbing the cliffs without hands.

Case 33 Baso's "No Mind, No Buddha"

三十三 非心非佛

馬祖、因僧問、如何是佛。

A monk asked Baso, "What is the Buddha?"

祖曰、非心非佛。

Baso answered, "No mind, no Buddha."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若向者裏見得、參學事畢。

If you understand this, you have finished studying Zen.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

路逢劍客須呈	Present a sword if you meet a swordsman;
不遇詩人莫獻	Don't offer a poem unless you meet a poet.
逢人且說三分	When talking, tell one-third of it;
未可全施一片	Don't divulge the whole at once.

Case 34 Nansen's "Reason Is Not the Way"

三十四 智不是道

南泉云、心不是佛、智不是道。

Nansen said, "Mind is not the Buddha, reason is not the Way."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、南泉可謂、老不識羞。

Nansen, growing old, had no shame.

纔開臭口、家醜外揚。

Just opening his stinking mouth, he let slip the family secrets.

然雖如是、知恩者少。

Yet there are very few who are grateful for his kindness.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

天晴日頭出	The sky clears, the sun shines bright,
雨下地上濕	The rain comes, the earth gets wet.
盡情都說了	He opens his heart and expounds the whole secret,
只恐信不及	But I fear he is little appreciated.

Case 35 Seijō's Soul Separated

三十五 倩女離魂

五祖問僧云、倩女離魂、那箇是真底。

Goso said to his monks, "Seijō's soul separated from her being. Which was the real Seijō?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若向者裏悟得真底、便知出殼入殼如宿旅舍。

When you realize what the real is, you will see that we pass from one husk to another like travelers stopping for a night's lodging.

其或未然、切莫亂走。

But if you do not realize it yet, I earnestly advise you not to rush about wildly.

驀然地水火風一散、如落湯 蟹七手八腳。

When earth, water, fire, and air suddenly separate, you will be like a crab struggling in boiling water with its seven or eight arms and legs.

那時莫言、不道。

When that happens, don't say I didn't warn you!

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

雲月是同 The moon above the clouds is ever the same;

溪山各異 Valleys and mountains are separate from each other.

萬福萬福 All are blessed, all are blessed;

是一是二 Are they one or are they two?

Case 36 When You Meet a Man of the Way

三十六 路逢達道

五祖曰、路逢達道人、不將語默對、且道、將甚麼對。

Goso said, "When you meet a man of the Way on the path, do not meet him with words or in silence. Tell me, how will you meet him?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若向者裏對得親切、不妨慶快。

In such a case, if you can manage an intimate meeting with him it will certainly be gratifying.

其或未然、也須一切處著眼。

But if you cannot, you must be watchful in every way.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

路逢達道人 Meeting a man of the Way on the road,

不將語默對 Meet him with neither words nor silence.

腮劈面拳 A punch on the jaw:

直下會便會 Understand, if you can directly understand.

Case 37 Jōshū's Oak Tree

三十七 庭前栢樹

趙州、因僧問、如何是祖師西來意。

A monk asked Jōshū, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming to China?"

州云、庭前栢樹子。

Jōshū said, "The oak tree in the garden."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若向趙州答處見得親切、前無釋迦後無彌勒。

If you understand Jōshū's answer intimately, there is no Shakyā before you, no Maitreya to come.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

言無展事 Words cannot express things;

語不投機 Speech does not convey the spirit.

承言者喪 Swayed by words, one is lost;

滯句者迷 Blocked by phrases, one is bewildered.

Case 38 A Buffalo Passes the Window

三十八 牛過窓櫺

五祖曰、譬如水 牛過窓櫺、頭角四蹄都過了、因甚麼尾巴過不得。

Goso said, "A buffalo passes by the window. His head, horns, and four legs all go past. But why can't the tail pass too?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若 向者裏顛倒、著得一隻眼、下得一轉語、可以上報四恩下資三有。

If you make a complete about-face, open your eye, and give a turning word on this point, you will be able to repay the four kinds of love that have favored you and help the sentient beings in the three realms who follow you.

其或未然、更須照顧尾巴始得。

If you are still unable to do this, return to this tail and reflect upon it, and then for the first time you will realize something.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

過去墮坑 Passing by, it falls into a ditch;

回來却被壞 Coming back, all the worse, it is lost.

者些尾巴子 This tiny little tail,

直是甚奇怪 What a strange thing it is!

Case 39 A Mistake in Speaking

三十九 雲門話墮

雲門、因僧問、光明寂照遍河沙。

A monk said to Unmon, "The brilliance of the Buddha silently illuminates the whole universe. . ."

一句未絕、門遽曰、豈不是張拙秀才語。

But before the could finish the verse, Unmon said, "Aren't those the words of Chōetsu the Genius?"

僧云、是。

"Yes, they are," answered the monk.

門云、話墮也。

"You have slipped up in your speaking," Unmon said.

後來、死心拈云、且道、那裏是者僧話墮處。

Afterward, Shishin Zenji brought up the matter and said, "Tell me, at what point did the monk err in his speaking?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若向者裏見得雲門用處孤危、者僧因甚話墮、堪與人天爲師。

If you clearly understand this and realize how exacting Unmon was in his method, and what made the monk err in his speaking, you are qualified to be a teacher of heaven and earth.

若也未明、自救不了。

If you are not yet clear about it, you are far from saving yourself.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

急流垂釣 A line cast in the rapids,

貪餌者著 The greedy will be caught.

口縫纔開 Before you start to open your mouth,

性命喪却 Your life is already lost!

Case 40 Tipping Over a Water Bottle

四十 □倒淨瓶

山和尚、始在百丈會中充典座。

When Isan Oshō was with Hyakujō, he was *tenzo* [典座 head cook] of the monastery.

百丈、將選大 主人。乃請同 首座對衆下語、出格者可往。

Hyakujō wanted to choose a master for Mount Tai-i, so he called together all the monks and told them that anyone who could answer his question in an outstanding manner would be chosen.

百丈遂拈淨瓶、置地上設問云、不得喚作淨瓶、汝喚作甚麼。

Then he took a water bottle and stood it on the floor, and said, "You may not call this a water bottle. What do you call it?"

首座乃云、不可喚作木□也。

The head monk said, "It cannot be called a stump."

百丈却問於山。

Hyakujō asked Isan his opinion.

山乃□倒淨瓶而去。

Isan tipped over the water bottle with his feet and went out.

百丈笑云、第一座 輸却山子也。

Hyakujō laughed and said, "The head monk loses."

因命之爲山。

And Isan was named as the founder of the new monastery.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、 山一期之勇、爭奈跳百丈圈 不出、 點將來、便重不便輕。

Isan displayed great spirit in his action, but he could not cut himself free from Hyakujō's apron strings. He preferred the heavier task to lighter one.

何故。□。

Why was he like that, eh?

脱得盤頭、擔起鐵枷。

He took off his headband to bear the iron yoke.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

下筮籬并木杓 Tossing bamboo baskets and ladles away,

當陽一突絕周遮 He made a glorious dash and swept all before him.

百丈重關欄不住 Hyakujō's barrier cannot stop his advance;

脚尖□出佛如麻 Thousands of Buddhas come forth from the tips of his feet.

Case 41 Bodhidharma's Mind-Pacifying

四十一 達磨安心

達磨面壁。

Bodhidharma sat facing the wall.

二祖立雪。

The Second Patriarch stood in the snow.

斷臂云、弟子心未安、乞師安心。

He cut off his arm and presented it to Bodhidharma, crying, "My mind has no peace as yet! I beg you, master, please pacify my mind!"

磨云、將心來爲汝安。

"Bring your mind here and I will pacify it for you," replied Bodhidharma.

祖云、覓心了不可得。

"I have searched for my mind, and I cannot take hold of it," said the Second Patriarch.

磨云、爲汝安心竟。

"Now your mind is pacified," said Bodhidharma.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、□齒老胡、十万里航海特特而來。

The broken-toothed old Hindu came so importantly, thousands of miles over the sea.

可謂是無風起浪。

This was raising waves where there was no wind.

末後接得一箇門人、又却六根不具。

In his last years he induced enlightenment in his disciple, who, to make matters worse, was defective in the six roots.

□。謝三郎不識四字。

Why, Shasanro did not know for ideographs.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

西來直指 Coming east, directly pointing,

事因囑起 You entrusted the Dharma, and trouble arose;

撓聒叢林 The clamor of the monasteries

元來是□ Is all because of you.

Case 42 The Girl Comes out of Samadhi

四十二 女子出定

世尊、昔、因文殊、至諸佛集處值諸佛各還本處。

Once, in the old days, in the time of the World-honored One, Manjusri went to the assembly of the Buddhas and found that everyone had departed to his original dwelling place.

惟有一女人近彼佛坐入於三昧。

Only a girl remained, sitting in samadhi close to the Buddha's throne.

文殊乃白佛、云何女人得近佛坐而我不得。

Manjusri asked Shakyamuni Buddha, "Why can the girl get near the Buddha's throne, while I cannot?"

佛告文殊、汝但覺此女、令從三昧起、汝自問之。

Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Bring her out of her samadhi and ask her yourself."

文殊遶女人三□、鳴指一下、乃托至梵天盡其神力而不能出。

Manjusri walked around the girl three times, snapped his fingers once, took her to the Brahma heaven, and exerted all his miraculous powers to bring her out of her meditation, but in vain.

世尊云、假使百千文殊亦出此女人定不得。

The World-honored One said, "Even a hundred thousand Manjusris cannot make her wake up.

下方過一十二億河沙國土有罔明菩薩。

But down below, past twelve hundred million lands as innumerable as the sands of Ganges, there is a Bodhisattva Mōmyō.

能出此女人定。

He will be able to rouse her from her samadhi."

須臾罔明大士、從地湧出禮拜世尊。世尊敕罔明。

Instantly the Bodhisattva Mōmyō emerged from the earth and made a bow to the World-honored One, who gave him his imperial order.

却至女人前鳴指一下。

The Bodhisattva went over to the girl and snapped his fingers once.

女人於是從定而出。

At this she came out of her samadhi.

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、釋迦老子、做者一場雜劇、不通小小。

Old Shakyamuni put a petty drama on the stage and failed to enlighten the masses.

且道、文殊是七佛之師、因甚出 女人定不得。

I want to ask you: Manjusri is the teacher of the Seven Buddhas; why couldn't he arouse the girl from her samadhi?

罔明初地菩薩、爲甚却出得。

How was it that Mōmyō, a Bodhisattva at the beginner's stage, could do it?

若向者裏見得親切、業識忙忙那伽大定。

If you understand this intimately, you will enjoy Nagya's grand samadhi in the busiest activity of consciousness.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

出得出不得 One was successful, the other was not;

渠儂得自由 Both secured freedom of mind.

神頭并鬼面 One in a god-mask, the other in a devil-mask;

敗闕當風流 Even in defeat, a beautiful performance.

Case 43 Shuzan's Shippei

四十三 首山竹篴

首山和尚、拈竹篴示衆云、汝等諸人、若喚作竹篴則觸。

Shuzan Oshō held up his *shippei* [staff of office] before his disciples and said, "You monks! If you call this a shippei, you oppose its reality.

不喚作竹篴則背。

If you do not call it a shippei, you ignore the fact.

汝諸人、且道、喚作甚麼。

Tell me, you monks, what will you call it?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、喚作竹篋則觸。

If you call it a shippei, you oppose its reality.

不喚作竹篋則背。

If you do not call it a shippei, you ignore the fact.

不得有語、不得無語。

Words are not available; silence is not available.

速道、速道。

Now, tell me quickly, what is it?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

拈起竹篋 Holding up the shippei,

行殺活令 He takes life, he gives life.

背觸交馳 Opposing and ignoring interweave.

佛祖乞命 Even Buddhas and patriarchs beg for their lives.

Case 44 Bashō's Staff

四十四 芭蕉 杖

芭蕉和尚示衆云、有 杖子、我興 杖子。

Bashō Osho said to his disciples, "If you have a staff, I will give you a staff.

無 杖子、我奪 杖子。

If you have no staff, I will take it from you."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、扶過斷橋水、伴歸無月村。

It helps me wade across a river when the bridge is down. It accompanies me to the village on a moonless night.

若喚作 杖、入地獄如箭。

If you call it a staff, you will enter hell like an arrow.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

諸方深與淺 The depths and shallows of the world

都在掌握中 Are all in its grasp.

□天□ 地 It supports the heaven and sustains the earth.

隨處振宗風 Everywhere, it enhances the doctrine.

Case 45 Hōen's "Who Is He?"

四十五 他是阿誰

東山演師祖曰、釋迦彌勒猶是他奴。

Hōen of Tōzan said, "Even Shakyā and Maitreya are servants of another.

且道、他是阿誰。

I want to ask you, who is he?"

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若也見得他分曉、譬如十字街頭撞見親爺相似、更不須問別人道是與不是。

If you can really see this "another" with perfect clarity, it is like encountering your own father at a crossroads. Why should you ask whether you recognize him or not?

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

他弓莫挽 Don't draw another's bow,

他馬莫騎 Don't ride another's horse,

他非莫辨 Don't discuss another's faults,

他事莫知 Don't explore another's affairs.

Case 46 Proceed On from the Top of the Pole

四十六 竿頭進步

石霜和尚云、百尺竿頭、如何進步。

Sekisō Oshō asked, "How can you proceed on further from the top of a hundred-foot pole?"

又古德云、百尺竿頭坐底人、雖然得入未爲真。

Another eminent teacher of old said, "You, who sit on the top of a hundred-foot pole, although you have entered the Way you are not yet genuine.

百尺竿頭、須進步十方世界現全身。

Proceed on from the top of the pole, and you will show your whole body in the ten directions."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、進得步、翻得身、更嫌何處不稱尊。

If you go on further and turn your body about, no place is left where you are not the master.

然雖如是、且道、百尺竿頭、如何進步。 。

But even so, tell me, how will you go on further from the top of a hundred-foot pole? Eh?"

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

瞎却頂門眼 He darkens the third eye of insight

錯認定盤星 And clings to the first mark on the scale.
拌身能捨命 Even though he may sacrifice his life,
一盲引衆盲 He is only a blind man leading the blind.

Case 47 Tosotsu's Three Barriers

四十七 兜率三關

兜率悅和尚、設三關問學者、
Tosotsu Etsu Oshō set up three barriers for his disciples:
撥草參玄只圖見性。

1. You leave no stone unturned to explore profundity, simply to see into your true nature.

即今上人性在甚處。

Now, I want to ask you, just at this moment, where is your true nature?

識得自性方脫生死。

2. If you realize your true nature, you are free from life and death.

眼光落時、作麼生脫。

Tell me, when your eyesight deserts you at the last moment, how can you be free from life and death?

脫得生死便知去處、四大分離向甚處去。

3. When you set yourself free from life and death, you should know your ultimate destination. So when the four elements separate, where will you go?

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、若能下得此三轉語、便可以隨處作主遇緣即宗。

If you can put turning words to these three questions, you are the master wherever you may stand and command Zen whatever circumstances you may be in.

其或未然、庵□易飽、細嚼難飢。

If otherwise, listen: gulping down your meal will fill you easily, but chewing it well can sustain you.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

一念普觀無量劫 This moment's thoughts sees through eternal time;

無量劫事即如今 Eternal time is just this moment.

如今□破箇一念 If you see through this moment's thought,

□破如今□底人 You see through the man who sees through this moment.

Case 48 Kempō's One Road

四十八 乾峰一路

乾峰和尚、因僧問、十方薄伽梵、一路涅槃門。

A monk asked Kempō Oshō, "It is written, 'Bhagavats in the ten directions. One straight road to Nirvana.'

未審路頭在甚麼處。

I still wonder where the road can be."

峰拈起 杖、劃一劃云、在者裏。

Kempō lifted his staff, drew a line, and said, "Here it is."

後僧請益雲門。

Later the monks asked the same question to Unmon,

門拈起扇子云、扇子□跳上三 十三天、築著帝釋鼻孔。

who held up his fan and said, "This fan jumps up to the thirty-third heaven and hits the nose of the deity Sakra Devanam Indra.

東海鯉魚、打一棒雨似盆傾。

When you strike the carp of the eastern sea, the rain comes down in torrents."

Mumon's Comment

無門曰、一人向深深海底行、□土揚塵、一人於高高山頂、白浪滔天。

One, going to the bottom of the sea, lifts up clouds of dust; the other, on the top of the highest mountain, rises towering waves to wash the sky.

把定放行、各出一隻手扶豎宗乘。

One holding fast, the other letting go, each stretches out his hand to support the profound teaching.

大似兩箇馳子相撞著。

They are just like two riders starting from opposite ends of the course and meeting in the middle.

世上應無直底人。

But none on earth can be absolutely direct.

正眼觀來二大老惣未識路頭在。

When examined with a true eye, neither of these two great masters knows the road.

Mumon's Verse 頌曰

未舉步時先已到 Before a step is taken, the goal is reached;

未動舌時先說了 Before the tongue is moved, the speech is finished.

直饒著著在機先 Though each move is ahead of the next,

更須知有向上竅 There is still a transcendent secret.

Mumon's Postscript

後序

從上佛祖垂示機緣、據款結案、初無剩語。

The sayings and doings of the Buddha and the patriarchs have been set down in their original form.

揭翻腦蓋、露出眼睛。

Nothing superfluous has been added by the author, who has taken the lid off his head and exposed his eyeballs.

肯要諸人直下承當、不從佗覓。

Your direct realization is demanded; it should not be sought through others.

若是通方上士。纔聞舉著、便知落處。

If you are a man of realization, you will immediately grasp the point at the slightest mention of it.

了無門戶可入、亦無階級可升。

There is no gate for you to go through; there are no stairs for you to ascend.

掉臂度關不問關吏。

You pass the checkpoint, squaring your shoulders, without asking permission of the keeper.

豈不見玄沙道、無門解脫之門、無意道人之意。

Remember Gensha's saying, "No-gate is the gate of emancipation; no-meaning is the meaning of the man of the Way."

又白雲道、明明知道只是者箇、爲甚麼透不過。

And Hakuun says, "Clearly you know how to talk of it, but why can't you pass this simple, specific thing?"

恁麼說話、也是赤土 牛 。

However, all this kind of talk is like making a mud pie with milk and butter.

若透得無門關、早是鈍置無門。

If you have passed the Mumonkan, you can make a fool of Mumon.

若透不得無門關、亦之辜負自己。

If not, you are betraying yourself.

所謂、涅槃心易曉、差別智難明。

It is easy to know the Nirvana mind but difficult to attain the wisdom of differentiation.

明得差別智、家國自安寧。

When you have realized this wisdom, peace and order will reign over your land.

時紹定改元 解制前五日

The change of era to Jōtei [1228], five days before the end of summer session

楊岐八世孫 無門比丘慧開 謹識。

Respectfully inscribed by Mumon Ekai Bhikkhu, eighth in succession from Yōgi

無門關 卷終

Wu-wen kuan (Mumonkan)

End of the book

Source

English translation by late Zen master *Katsuki Sekida* (*Two Zen Classics* 26-137)