

## **CASE 1 JOSHU'S DOG**

A monk asked Joshu in all earnestness, "Has a dog Buddha nature or not?" Joshu said, "Mu!"

## **CASE 2 HYAKUJO AND A FOX**

Whenever Master Hyakujo gave teisho on Zen, an old man sat with the monks to listen with the monks and always withdrew when they did. One day, however, he remained behind, and the master asked, "Who are you, standing here before me?" The old man replied, "I am not a human being. In the past, in the time of Kasho Buddha, I was the head of this monastery. Once a monk asked me, 'Does an enlightened man also fall into causation or not?' I replied, 'He does not.' Because of this answer, I was made to live as a fox for 500 lives. I beg you, please say the turning words on my behalf and release me from the fox body." The old man then asked Hyakujo, "Does an enlightened man also fall under the law of causation or not?" The Master said, "He does not ignore causation." Hearing this, the old man was at once enlightened. Making a bow to Hyakujo, he said, "I have now been released from the fox body, which will be found behind the mountain. I dare to make a request to the Master. Please bury it as you would a deceased monk."

The master had the Ino strike the gavel and announce to the monks that there would be a funeral for a deceased monk after the midday meal. The monks wondered, saying, "We are all in good health. There is no sick monk in the Nirvana hall. What is it all about?"

After the meal, the Master led the monks to a rock behind the mountain, poked out a dead fox with his staff, and cremated it.

In the evening the Master ascended the rostrum in the hall and told the monks the whole story. Obaku thereupon asked, "The old man failed to give the correct turning words and was made to live as a fox for 500 lives, you say; if, however, his answer had not been incorrect each time, what would he have become?" The Master said, "Come closer to me, I will tell you." Obaku then wstepped forward to Hyakujo and slapped him. The Master laughed aloud, clapping his hands, and said, "I thought a foreigner's beard is red, but I see that it is a foreigner with a red beard."

### **CASE 3**

## **GUTEI RAISES A FINGER**

Master Gutei, whenever he was questioned, just stuck up one finger.

At one time, he had a young attendant whom a visitor asked, "What is the Zen your Master is teaching?" The boy also stuck up one finger. Hearing of this, Gutei cut off the boy's finger with a knife. As the boy ran out screaming with pain, Gutei called to him. When the boy turned his head, Gutei stuck up his finger. The boy was suddenly enlightened.

When Gutei was about to die, he said to the assembled monks, "I attained Tenryu's Zen of One Finger. I used it all through my life, but could not exhaust it." When he had finished saying this, he died.

### **CASE 4**

## **THE FOREIGNER HAS NO BEARD**

Wakuan said, "Why has the foreigner from the West no beard?"

### **CASE 5**

## **KYOGEN'S MAN UP A TREE**

Master Kyogen said, "It is like a man up a tree who hangs from a branch by his mouth; his hands cannot grasp a bough, his feet cannot touch the tree. Another man comes under the tree and asks him the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West? If he does not answer, he does not meet the questioner's need. If he answers, he will lose his life. At such a time, how should he answer?"

## **CASE 6 SHAKYAMUNI HOLDS UP A FLOWER**

Long ago, when the World-Honored One was at Mount Grdhrakuta to give a talk, he held up a flower before the assemblage. At this, all remained silent. The Venerable Kasho alone broke into a smile. The World-Honored One said: "I have the all-pervading true Dharma, incomparable Nirvana, exquisite teaching of formless form. It does not rely on letters and is transmitted outside Scriptures. I now hand it to Maha Kasho."

## **CASE 7 JOSHU SAYS "WASH YOUR BOWLS"**

Once a monk made a request of Joshu, "I have just entered the monastery," he said, "Please give me instructions, Master." Joshu said, "Have you had your breakfast?" "Yes, I have," replied the monk. "Then," said Joshu, "wash your bowls." The monk had an insight.

## **CASE 8 KEICHU MAKES CARTS**

Master Gettan said to a monk, "Keichu made a cart whose wheels had a hundred spokes. Take both front and rear parts away and remove the axle: then what will it be?"

## **CASE 9 DAITSU CHISO**

Once a monk said to Master Seijo of Koyo, "Daitso Chiso Buddha did Zazen on a Bodhi seat for ten kalpas. Buddha Dharma was not manifested, nor did he attain Buddhahood. Why was it?"

Jo said, "Your question is splendid indeed." The monk persisted, "He did practice Zazen on a Bodhi seat. Why did he not attain Buddhahood?"

Jo replied, "Because he did not attain Buddhahood."

## **CASE 10**

### **SEIZEI, A POOR MONK**

A monk once said to Master Sozan, "I am poor and destitute. I beg you, oh Master, please help me and make me rich."

Sozan said. "Venerable Seizei!"

"Yes, Master," replied Seizei.

Sozan remarked, "having tasted three cups of the best wine, do you still say your lips are not yet moistened?"

## **CASE 11**

### **JOSHU SEES THE TRUE NATURE OF TWO HERMITS**

Joshu came to a hermit's hut and asked, "Anybody in? Anybody in?" The hermit thrust up his fist. "The water is too shallow to anchor a vessel," said Joshu, and went away.

He then came to another hermit, and called out, "Are you in? Are you in?" This hermit also held up his fist. "You are free either to give or to take away, either to kill or to give life," said Joshu, bowing to him.

## **CASE 12**

### **ZUIGAN CALLS "MASTER"**

Everyday Master Zuigan Shigen used to call out to himself, "Oh, Master!" and would answer himself, "Yes?" "Are you awake?" he would ask, and would answer, "Yes, I am." "Never be deceived by others, any day, any time." "No, I will not."

## **CASE 13**

### **TOKUSAN CARRIED HIS BOWLS**

Tokusan one day came down to the dining room carrying his bowls. Seppo said, "Old Master, the bell has not rung nor the drum has not been struck. Where are you going with your bowls?" Tokusan at once turned back to his room. Seppo told this incident to Ganto, who remarked, "Great Master though he is, Tokusan has not yet grasped the last word of Zen."

Hearing of this, Tokusan sent his attendant to call Ganto in, and asked, "Do you not approve of me?" Ganto whispered his reply to him. Tokusan was satisfied and silent.

The next day Tokusan appeared on the rostrum. Sure enough, his talk was different from the usual ones. Ganto came in front of the monastery, laughed heartily, clapped his hands, and said, "What a great joy it is! The old Master has now grasped the last word of Zen. From now on nobody in the whole world can ever make light of him."

## **CASE 14**

### **NANSEN KILLS THE CAT**

Once the monks of the Eastern Hall and the Western Hall were disputing about a cat. Nansen, holding up a cat, said, "Monks, if you can say a word of Zen, I will spare the cat. If you cannot, I will kill it." No monk could answer. Nansen finally killed the cat. In the evening, when Joshu came back, Nansen told him of the incident. Joshu took off his sandal, put it on his head, and walked off. Nansen said, "If you had been there, I could have saved the cat!"

## **CASE 15**

### **TOZAN GETS SIXTY BLOWS**

When Tozan came to have an interview with Unmon, Unmon asked, "Where have you been recently?" "At Sado, Master," Tozan replied. "Where did you stay during the last ge-period?" "At Hozu of Konan," replied Tozan. "When did you leave there?" "On the 25th of August," Tozan answered. Unmon explained, "I give you sixty blows with my stick!"

The next day Tozan came up again and asked the Master, "Yesterday you gave me sixty blows with your stick. I do not know where my fault was." Unmon cried out, "You rice-bag! Have you been prowling about like that from Kosei to Konan?" At this Tozan was enlightened.

## **CASE 16**

### **BELL SOUND AND PRIEST'S ROBE**

Unmon said, "Look! This world is vast and wide. Why do you put on your priest's robe at the sound of the bell?"

## **CASE 17**

### **THE NATIONAL TEACHER CALLS THREE TIMES**

The National Teacher called to his attendant three times, and the attendant answered three times. The National Teacher said, "I thought I had transgressed against you, but you too had transgressed against me."

## **CASE 18**

### **TOZAN'S THREE POUNDS OF FLAX**

A monk asked Master Tozan, "What is Buddha?" Tozan said, "Three pounds of flax"

## **CASE 19**

### **ORDINARY MIND IS TAO**

Joshu once asked Nansen, "What is Tao?" Nansen answered, "Ordinary mind is Tao." "Then should we direct ourselves toward it or not?" asked Joshu. "If you try to direct yourself toward it, you go away from it," answered Nansen. Joshu continued, "If we do not try, how can we know that it is the Tao?" Nansen replied, "Tao does not belong to knowing or not-knowing. Knowing is illusion; not-knowing is a blankness. If you really attain to Tao of no-doubt, it is like the great void, so vast and boundless. How, then, can there be right and wrong in the Tao?" At these words, Joshu was suddenly enlightened.

## **CASE 20**

### **A MAN OF GREAT STRENGTH**

Master Shogen said, “Why is it that a man of great strength cannot lift his leg?” Again he said, “It is not with his tongue that he speaks.”

## **CASE 21**

### **UNMON’S KANSHIKETSU**

A monk asked Unmon, “What is Buddha?” Unmon said, “A shit-stick!” (Kan-shiketsu!)

## **CASE 22**

### **KASHO AND A FLAGPOLE**

Ananda once said to Kasho, “The World-Honored One transmitted to you the brocade robe, what else did he transmit to you?” Kasho called out, “Ananda!” Ananda answered, “Yes, Sir.” Kasho said, “Pull down the flagpole at the gate.”

## CASE 23

### THINK NEITHER GOOD NOR EVIL

The Sixth Patriarch was once pursued by the monk Myo at Daiyurei. The Patriarch, seeing Myo coming, laid the robe and bowl on a stone and said, "This robe symbolizes faith. How can it be fought for by force? I will leave it to you to take it" Myo tried to take up the robe, but it was as immovable as a mountain.

Myo was terrified and hesitated. He said, "I have come for the Dharma, not for the robe. I beg you, please teach me, oh lay brother."

The Sixth Patriarch said, "Think neither good nor evil. At such a moment, what is the True Self of Monk Myo?" At this, Myo was at once enlightened. His whole body was dripping with sweat. With tears he made a bow and asked, "Besides these secret words and meanings, is there any further significance or not?" The Patriarch said, "What I have just told you is not secret. If you will realize your true self, what is secret is in you-yourself." Myo said, "Although at Obai I followed other monks in training, I did not awaken to my True Self. Thanks to your instruction, which is to the point, I am like one who has drunk water and actually experienced himself whether it is cold or warm. You are really my teacher, lay brother!" The Patriarch said, "If you are so awakened, both you and I have Obai as our teacher. Live up to your attainment with care."

## CASE 24

### ABANDON WORDS AND SPEAKING

A monk once asked Master Fuketsu, "Both speaking and silence are concerned with *ri-bi relativity*. How can we be free and nontransgressing?" Fuketsu said, "How fondly I remember Konan in March! The partridges are calling, and the flowers are fragrant."

## CASE 25

### TALK BY THE MONK OF THE THIRD SEAT

Master Kyozan had a dream. He went to Maitreya's place and was given the third seat. A venerable monk struck the table with a gavel and announced, "Today the talk will be given by the monk of the third seat." Gyozan struck the table with the gavel and said, "The Dharma of Mahayana goes beyond the Four propositions and transcends the One Hundred Negations. Listen carefully!"



## **CASE 26**

### **TWO MONKS ROLLED UP THE BAMBOO BLINDS**

The monks gathered in the hall to hear the Great Hogen of Seiryō give teishō before the midday meal. Hogen pointed to the bamboo blinds. At this, two monks went to the blinds and rolled them up alike. Hogen said, "One has it, the other not."

## **CASE 27**

### **NEITHER MIND NOR BUDDHA**

A monk once asked Master Nansen, "Is there any Dharma that has not yet been taught to the people?" Nansen said, "Yes, there is." The monk asked, "What is the Dharma that has not been taught to the people?" Nansen said, "This is neither mind, nor Buddha, nor beings."

## **CASE 28**

### **WELL-KNOWN RYUTAN**

Tokusan once called on Ryutan to ask for instruction and stayed until night fell. Ryutan said, "It is getting late; you had better leave." At last, Tokusan said good-bye, lifted up the door curtain, and went out. Noticing that it was dark, he turned back and said, "It is dark outside." Ryutan thereupon lit a candle and handed it to him. Tokusan was about to take it, when Ryutan blew it out. At this Tokusan was all of a sudden enlightened. He made a bow.

Ryutan asked, "What realization do you have?" Tokusan replied, "From now on, I will not doubt the sayings of any of the great Zen Masters in the world."

The next day Ryutan mounted the rostrum and declared, "Among monks here there is a fellow whose fangs are like swords, and whose mouth is like a bowl of blood. You may strike him with a stick, but he will not turn his head. Some day in the future, he will establish his way on a steep and lofty peak."

Tokusan then took out his notes and commentaries, and in the front of the monastery hall he held up a burning torch and said, "Even though one masters various philosophies, it is like placing a single strand of hair in the great sky; even if one gains all the essential knowledge s in the world, it is like throwing a drop of water into a deep ravine." Taking up his notes and commentaries, he burned them all. Then he left with gratitude.

## **CASE 29**

### **NEITHER THE WIND NOR THE FLAG**

The wind was flapping a temple flag. Two monks were arguing about it. One said the flag was moving. The other said the wind was moving. Arguing back and forth, they could come to no agreement. The Sixth Patriarch said. "It is neither the wind nor the flag that is moving. It is your mind that is moving." The two monks were struck with awe.

## **CASE 30**

### **MIND IS BUDDHA**

Taibai once asked Baso, "What is Buddha?" Baso answered, "Mind is Buddha."

## **CASE 31**

### **JOSHU SAW THROUGH THE OLD WOMAN**

A monk asked an old woman, "Which way should I take to Gotai?" The old woman said, "Go straight on." When the monk had taken a few steps, she remarked, "He may look like a fine monk, but he too goes off like that!" Later, a monk told Joshu about it. Joshu said, "Wait a while. I will go and see through that old woman for you." The next day off he went, and asked her the same question. The old woman, too, gave him the same reply. When he returned, Joshu announced to the monks "I have seen through the old woman of Mount Gotai for you."

## **CASE 32**

### **A NON-BUDDHIST QUESTIONS THE BUDDHA**

A non-Buddhist once asked the World-Honored One, "I do not ask for words, nor do I ask for no-words." The World-Honored One remained seated. The non-Buddhist praised him, saying, "The great compassion of the World-Honored One has dispelled the clouds of my ignorance and enabled me to be enlightened." Making a bow of gratitude, he departed.

Ananda then asked Buddha, "What realization did the non-Buddhist have that made him praise you like that? The World-Honored One replied, "He is like a high-mettled horse which starts at even the shadow of the whip."

**CASE 33**  
**NO MIND, NO BUDDHA**

A monk once asked Baso, “What is Buddha?” Baso answered, “No mind, no Buddha.”

**CASE 34**  
**KNOWING IS NOT THE WAY**

Nansen said, “Mind is not Buddha; wisdom is not the Tao.”

**CASE 35**  
**SEN-JO AND HER SOUL ARE SEPARATED**

Goso asked a monk, “Sen-jo and her soul are separated: which is the true one?”

**CASE 36**  
**MEETING A MAN OF TAO ON THE WAY**

Goso said, “If you meet a man of Tao on the Way, greet him neither with words nor with silence. Now tell me, how will you greet him?”

**CASE 37**  
**THE OAK TREE IN THE FRONT GARDEN**

A monk asked Joshu, “What is the meaning of the patriarch’s coming from the West?” Joshu answered, “The oak tree in the front garden.”

## **CASE 38**

### **A BUFFALO PASSES THROUGH A WINDOW**

Goso said, “To give an example, it is like a buffalo passing through a window. His head, horns, and four legs have all passed through. Why is it that its tail cannot?”

## **CASE 39**

### **UNMON SAYS "YOU HAVE MISSED IT!"**

A monk once wanted to ask Unmon a question and started to say, “The light serenely shines over the whole universe.” Before he had finished the first line, Unmon suddenly interrupted, “Isn’t that the poem of Chosetsu Shusai?” The monk answered, “Yes, it is.” Unmon said, “You have missed it.”

Later, Master Shishin took up this koan and said, “Now tell me, why has this monk missed it?”

## **CASE 40**

### **KICKING OVER THE PITCHER**

When Master Isan was studying under Hyakujo, he worked as tenzo of the monastery. Hyakujo wanted to choose an abbot for Daii monastery. He told the head monk and all the rest of his disciples to make their Zen presentations, and the ablest one would be sent to found the monastery. Then Hyakujo took a pitcher, placed it on the floor, and asked the question: “This must not be called a pitcher. What do you call it?” The head monk said, “It cannot be called a wooden sandal.” Hyakujo then asked Isan. Isan walked up, kicked over the pitcher, and left. Hyakujo said, “The head monk has been defeated by Isan.” So Isan was ordered to found the monastery.

## **CASE 41**

### **BODHIDHARMA AND PEACE OF MIND**

Bodhidharma sat in zazen facing the wall. The Second Patriarch, who had been standing in the snow, cut off his arm and said, “Your disciple’s mind is not yet at peace. I beg you my teacher, please give it peace.” Bodhidharma said, “Bring the mind to me and I will set it at rest.” The Second Patriarch said, “I have searched for the mind, and it is finally unattainable.” Bodhidharma said, “I have thoroughly set it at rest for you.”

## **CASE 42**

### **A WOMAN COMES OUT OF MEDITATION**

Once long long ago, the World-Honored One came to the place where many Buddhas were assembled. When Manjusri arrived there, the Buddhas all returned to their original places. Only a woman remained, close to the Buddha seat in deep meditation. Manjusri spoke to the Buddha, “Why can a woman be close to the Buddha seat, and I cannot?”

The Buddha told Manjusri, “You awaken this woman from her meditation and ask her yourself.”

Manjusri walked around the woman three times, snapped his fingers once, then took her up to the Brahma Heaven and tried all his supernatural powers, but was unable to bring her out of meditation.

The World-Honored One said, “Even hundreds of thousands of Manjusris would be unable to ring her out of meditation. Down below, past one billion, two hundred million countries as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, there is a Bodhisattva called Momyo. He will be able to awaken her from meditation.”

In an instant Momyo emerged from the earth and worshipped the World-Honored One. World-Honored One gave him the order. Momyo then walked to the woman and snapped his fingers only once. At this, the woman came out of her meditation.

### **CASE 43 SHUZAN AND A STAFF**

Master Shuzan held up his staff, and showing it to the assembled disciples, said, "You monks, if you call this a staff, you are committed to the name. If you call it not-a-staff, you negate the fact. Tell me, you monks, what do you call it?"

### **CASE 44 BASHO AND A STICK**

Master Basho said to the monks, "If you have a stick, I shall give one to you. If you do not have a stick, I shall take it away from you."

### **CASE 45 WHO IS HE?**

Our Patriarch Master Hoen of Tozan said, "Shakyamuni and Maitreya are but his servants. Now tell me, who is he?"

### **CASE 46 STEP FORWARD FROM THE TOP OF A POLE**

Master Sekiso said, "From the top of a pole one hundred feet high, how do you step forward?" An ancient Master also said that one sitting at the top of a pole one hundred feet high, even if he has attained "it", has not yet been truly enlightened. He must step forward from the pole one hundred feet high and manifest his whole body in ten directions."

## **CASE 47**

### **TOSOTSU'S THREE BARRIERS**

Master Juetsu of Tosotsu Etsu made three barriers to test monks.

To inquire after the Truth, groping your way through the underbrush, is for the purpose of seeing into your nature. Here, now, where is your nature, Venerable Monk?

If you realize your own nature, you certainly are free from life and death, When your eyes are closed, how can you be free from life and death?

If you are free from life and death, you know where you will go. When the four elements are decomposed, where do you go?

## **CASE 48**

### **KEMPO'S ONE WAY**

A monk once asked Master Kempo, "The Bhagavats of the ten directions have one way to Nirvana. I wonder where this one way is." Kempo held up his stick, drew a line, and said, "Here it is!"

Later the monk asked Unmon for his instruction on this mondo. Unmon held up his fan and said, "This fan has jumped up to the Thirty-third heaven and hit the nose of the deity there. The carp of the Eastern Sea leaps, and it rains cats and dogs."