

All Buddhas and All Living Beings are Just This One Mind

Teachings of the Buddhas and Zen Ancestors on Buddha Nature, Empty Awareness, and Nonduality
Compiled by Kokyo Henkel

Pabhassara Sutta (Luminous Sutta, Anguttara Nikaya of Pali Canon 1.49-52)

(translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu)

Luminous (pabhassara), monks, is the mind. And it is defiled by incoming defilements. The uninstructed run-of-the-mill person doesn't discern that as it actually is present, which is why I tell you that—for the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person—there is no development of the mind. Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements. The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones discerns that as it actually is present, which is why I tell you that—for the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones—there is development of the mind.

Kevaddha Sutta (About Kevaddha, Digha Nikaya 11 of Pali Canon)

(translated by Maurice Walshe)

Where consciousness is signless, boundless, all-luminous, that's where earth, water, fire and air find no footing; there both long & short, small & great, fair & foul – there name-and-form are wholly destroyed.

Nibbana Sutta (Unbinding Sutta, Udana 8.3 of Pali Canon)

(translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu)

There is, monks, an unborn—unbecome—unmade—unfabricated. If there were not that unborn—unbecome—unmade—unfabricated, there would not be the case that emancipation from the born—become—made—fabricated would be discerned. But precisely because there is an unborn—unbecome—unmade—unfabricated, emancipation from the born—become—made—fabricated is discerned.

Ashtasahasrika Prajnaparamita Sutra (Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines Sutra, Chapter 12)

(translated by Edward Conze)

The mind of the Buddha is never stopped, it was never produced, it has no duration in between production and stopping, it gives no support, it is infinite, since it cannot be measured, and it is inexhaustible, like the realm of Dharma (dharmadhatu) itself. The Tathagata knows the polluted minds of beings for what they are. For he knows that the minds of ordinary people are not actually polluted by the polluting forces of perverted views, which, being nothing but wrong ideas, do not really find a place in them. The Tathagata knows unpolluted thoughts for what they are. For he knows that those minds are transparently luminous (prabhasvara) in their essential original nature.

Samdhinirmochana Sutra (Unlocking the Deep Mystery Sutra's "Questions of Maitreya," Chapter 8)

(translated by John Powers)

(Maitreya asked,) "Bhagavan, what is the image, the focus of samadhi which perceives [an image]? Is it 'different from the mind' or is it 'not different'?" "Maitreya, it is 'not different'. Why is it not different?

Because that image is simply cognition-only (vijñaptimatra). Maitreya, I have explained that consciousness is fully distinguished by [the fact that its] object of observation is cognition-only."

"Bhagavan, if that image, the focus of samadhi, is not different from the mind, how does the mind itself investigate the mind itself?" The Bhagavan replied: "Maitreya, although no phenomenon apprehends any other phenomenon, nevertheless, the mind that is generated in that way appears in that way. Maitreya, for instance, based on form, form itself is seen in a perfectly clear round mirror, but one thinks, 'I see an image'. The form and the appearance of the image appear as different factualities. Likewise, the mind that is generated in that way and the focus of samadhi known as the 'image' also appear to be separate factualities." "Bhagavan, are the appearances of the forms of sentient beings and so forth, which abide in the nature of images of the mind, 'not different' from the mind?" The Bhagavan replied: "Maitreya, they are 'not different'. However, because childish beings with distorted understanding do not recognize these images as cognition-only, just as they are in reality, they misconstrue them."... "What is the one-pointed mind?" "It is the realization that: 'This image which is the focus of samadhi is cognition-only.' Having realized that, it is mental attention to suchness."

Mahaparinirvana Sutra (Great Complete Unbinding Sutra’s chapters 3 and 12: “Tathagata Nature”)
(translated by Eric Greene)

No self is birth and death; self is the Tathagata. What is impermanent are voice-hearers and the individually awakened; what is permanent is the Tathagata’s dharma body. Suffering is all outside ways; happiness is nirvana. Impurity is conditioned dharmas; purity is the true dharma of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. This is called ‘not inverted.’ Because of not being inverted, [one] knows the letter and the meaning. If one wishes to be separate from these four mistaken inversions, one should understand permanence, happiness, self, and purity in this way... Thereupon Kashyapa asked the Buddha: “World-honored One, is there any self anywhere in the twenty-five modes of existence?” The Buddha said: “Good son, the Tathagata’s treasure-store (tathagatagarbha) is the self. All sentient beings have the Buddha-nature, and this is precisely the self. This self has, from the beginning, been constantly covered by innumerable afflictions, and therefore sentient beings are unable to see it... Good son, I now universally reveal the Buddha-nature possessed by all sentient beings, which has been veiled by the afflictions. It is like a poor woman who though she had a gold treasure-store could not see it. Today, the Tathagata reveals to all sentient beings the precious treasure-store of awakening, the Buddha-nature. When sentient beings see this, their hearts are filled with joy and they take refuge in the Tathagata.”

Shrimaladevi Sutra (Lion’s Roar of Queen Shrimala Sutra)
(translated by Diana Y. Paul)

(Queen Shrimala said,) “O Lord, the wisdom of the tathāgatagarbha (buddha heart/womb/essence) is the Tathāgata’s wisdom of emptiness (shūnyatā). O Lord, the tathāgatagarbha has not been seen nor attained originally by all the arhats, pratyekabuddhas, and powerful bodhisattvas. O Lord, there are two kinds of wisdom of emptiness with reference to the tathāgatagarbha. The tathāgatagarbha that is empty is separate from, free from, and different from the stores of all defilements. And the tathāgatagarbha that is not empty is not separate from, not free from, and not different from the inconceivable Buddha-Dharmas more numerous than the sands of the Ganges River... The tathāgatagarbha is neither life nor death. The tathāgatagarbha is separate from the conditioned. The tathāgatagarbha is eternal and unchanging. Therefore, the tathāgatagarbha is the basis, the support, and the foundation. O Lord, the tathāgatagarbha is not separate, not severed, not liberated from, and not different from the inconceivable Buddha-Dharmas. O Lord, the basis, support, and foundation of conditioned phenomena, which are severed from, separate from, and different from the Buddha-Dharmas, [also] are the tathāgatagarbha... The tathāgatagarbha is without any prior limit, is non-arising, and is indestructible, accepting suffering, having revulsion toward suffering, and aspiring to nirvana. O Lord, the tathāgatagarbha is not a substantial self, nor a living being, nor ‘fate,’ nor a person. The tathāgatagarbha is not a realm for living beings who have degenerated into the belief of a substantially existent body or for those who have contrary views, or who have minds bewildered by emptiness. O Lord, the tathāgatagarbha is the womb of the dharmas, the womb of the Dharma body, the transcendental womb, and the inherently pure womb. This tathāgatagarbha that is inherently pure is the inconceivable realm of the Tathāgata that has been contaminated by extrinsic defilements and other virulent defilements.”... The Buddha, with extreme joy, praised her, “Yes, it is so! It is so! The fact that there is defilement in a mind that is inherently pure is difficult to comprehend. There are two subjects that are difficult to completely comprehend. They are the mind that is inherently pure and the fact that this [same] mind has been contaminated by defilements.”

Tathagatagarbha Sutra (Heart of the Thus Come Ones Sutra)
(translated by William H. Grosnick)

The Buddha can really see sentient beings’ tathagata-garbha. And because he wants to disclose the tathagata-garbha to them, he expounds the sutras and the Dharma, in order to destroy kleshas (obscurations) and reveal the buddha-dhatu (buddha-element, buddha-nature). Such is the dharma of all buddhas. Whether or not buddhas appear in the world, the tathagata-garbha of all beings is eternal and unchanging. It is just that it is covered by kleshas of sentient beings. When the Tathagata appears in the

world, he expounds the Dharma far and wide to remove their ignorance and tribulation and to purify their universal wisdom. If there is a bodhisattva who has faith in this teaching and who practices it with single-pointed mind, he will attain vimukti (liberation) and correct universal enlightenment and for the sake of the world he will perform buddha deeds far and wide.

Lankavatara Sutra (Descent into Sri Lanka Sutra, sections XXVIII, LXXXII)

(translated by Red Pine)

Mahamati Bodhisattva then asked the Buddha, “In the sutras, the Bhagavan says that the tathagata-garbha is intrinsically pure, endowed with thirty-two attributes and present in the bodies of all beings, and that, like a priceless jewel wrapped in soiled clothing, the ever-present, unchanging tathagata-garbha is likewise wrapped in the soiled clothing of the skandhas, dhatus, and ayatanas and stained with the stain of the erroneous projections (parikalpa) of greed, anger, and delusion, and that is what all buddhas teach. How is it that what the Bhagavan says about the tathagata-garbha is the same as what followers of other paths say about a self (atman)? Bhagavan, followers of other paths also speak of an immortal creator without attributes, omnipresent and indestructible. And they say this, Bhagavan, is the self.” The Buddha replied, “Mahamati, the tathagata-garbha of which I speak is not the same as the self mentioned by followers of other paths. Mahamati, when I speak about the tathagata-garbha, sometimes I call it ‘emptiness’ (shunyata), ‘formlessness’ (animitta), or ‘intentionlessness’ (apranihita), or ‘realm of reality’ (bhutakoti), ‘dharma nature’ (dharmata), or ‘dharma body’ (dharmakaya), or ‘nirvana,’ ‘what is devoid of self-existence’ (nisvavabhavata), or ‘what neither arises nor ceases,’ or ‘original quiescence,’ or ‘intrinsic nirvana,’ or similar expressions. It is to put an end to the fear foolish beings have about the expression ‘no self’ (nairatmya) that the tathagatas, the arhats, the fully enlightened ones proclaim the teaching of the tathagata-garbha as a projectionless (nirvikalpa) realm devoid of fabrications. Mahamati, bodhisattvas of the present and the future should not become attached to any view of a self... The tathagata-garbha is the cause of whatever is good or bad and is responsible for every form of existence everywhere. It is like an actor who changes appearances in different settings but who lacks a self or what belongs to a self. Because this is not understood, followers of other paths unwittingly imagine an agent responsible for the effects that arise from the threefold combination (of sensory faculty, object, and consciousness). When it is impregnated by the habit-energy (vasana) of beginningless fabrications (prapancha), it is known as the repository consciousness (alaya-vijnana) and gives birth to fundamental ignorance along with seven kinds of consciousness. It is like the ocean whose waves rise without cease. But it transcends the misconception of impermanence or the conceit of a self and is essentially pure and clear... Mahamati, although this repository consciousness of the tathagata-garbha (tathagata-garbha-alaya-vijnana) seen by the minds of shravakas and pratyeka-buddhas is essentially pure, because it is obscured by the dust of sensation (klesha), it appears impure – but not to tathagatas.”

Bodhidharma’s Breakthrough Sermon (First Chinese Chan Ancestor, fifth century)

(translated by Red Pine)

If someone is determined to reach enlightenment, what is the most essential method he can practice? The most essential method, which includes all other methods, is beholding the mind. But how can one method include all others? The mind is the root from which all things grow; if you can understand the mind, everything else is included. It’s like the root of a tree. All a tree’s fruit and flowers, branches and leaves depend on its root. If you nourish its root, a tree multiplies. If you cut its root, it dies.

Sengcan’s Song of the Trusting Mind (Third Chinese Chan Ancestor, Kanchi Sosan, seventh century)

(translated by Richard Clarke, revised by Kokyo Henkel)

The Way is perfect like vast space, where nothing is lacking and nothing is extra. Indeed, it is due to our choosing or rejecting that we do not see thus... To return to the root is to find the meaning, but to pursue appearances is to miss the source. At the moment of turning the light of awareness around, there is going beyond appearance and emptiness. The changes that appear to occur in the empty world we call real only because of ignorance. Do not search for the truth; only cease to hold opinions. Dualistic constructs do not

abide, so be careful not to pursue them. If there is even a trace of this and that, right and wrong, the mind will be lost in confusion. Although all dualities come from the one, do not be attached even to this one. When the one mind is unborn, nothing in the world can offend, and when a thing can no longer offend it ceases to exist in the old way... It is empty, clear, and self-illuminating, with no exertion of the mind's power. It is not thinking, feeling, knowing, or imagining. In this world of suchness there is neither self nor other. When asked to express this reality you can only say, "nonduality." In this nonduality nothing is separate, nothing is excluded... The trusting mind is without duality, nonduality is the trusting mind.

Hongren's Treatise on the Supreme Vehicle (Fifth Chinese Chan Ancestor, Daiman Konin, 7th century)
(translated by Thomas Cleary)

The basic essence of cultivating enlightenment should be discerned: it is the inherently complete and pure mind, in which there is no false discrimination, and body and mind are fundamentally pure, unborn, and undying. This is the basic teacher; this is better than invoking the Buddhas of the ten directions. How do we know that the inherent mind is fundamentally pure? According to the *Ten Stages Scripture*, there is an indestructible Buddha-nature in the bodies of living beings, like the orb of the sun, its body luminous, round and full, vast and boundless; but because it is covered by the dark clouds of the five clusters, it cannot shine, like a lamp hidden inside a pitcher. When there are clouds and fog everywhere, the world is dark, but that does not mean the sun has decomposed. Why is there no light? The light is never destroyed, it is just enshrouded by clouds and fog. The pure mind of all living beings is like this, merely covered up by the dark clouds of obsession with objects, arbitrary thoughts, psychological afflictions, and views and opinions. If you can just keep the mind still so that errant thought does not arise, the reality of nirvana will naturally appear. This is how we know the inherent mind is originally pure.

Huineng's Platform Sutra (Sixth Chinese Chan Ancestor, Daikan Eno, eighth century)
(translated by Red Pine)

This material body is an inn and not a fit refuge. But the three bodies (of buddha) are your ever-present dharma nature. Everyone has them. But because people are deluded, they don't see them. They look for the three-bodied tathagata outside themselves and don't see the three-bodied buddha in their own material body. Good friends, listen to this good friend of yours, and I will tell you good friends how to see within your material body the three-bodied buddha present in your dharma nature, the three-bodied buddha that arises from this nature of yours. What do we mean by the pure dharma-body (dharmakaya) buddha? Good friends, everyone's nature is fundamentally pure, and the ten thousand dharmas are present in this nature. If we think about doing something bad, we commit bad deeds. And if we think about doing something good, we perform good deeds. Thus, we know all dharmas are present in our nature. But our nature itself remains pure. The sun and moon are always shining. It is only due to cloud cover that there is light above but darkness below and we can't see the sun or moon or stars. Then suddenly the wind of wisdom comes along and blows the clouds and drives the fog away, and a panorama of ten thousand images appears all at once. Our nature is pure like the clear sky above, and our wisdom is like the sun and the moon, our wisdom is always shining. But if externally we become attached to objects, the clouds of delusion cover up our nature, and we can't see it... What do we mean by the myriad-fold transformation body (nirmanakaya)? If we didn't think, our nature would be utterly empty. When we think, we transform ourselves. If we think evil thoughts, we turn into the denizens of hell. If we think good thoughts, we turn into the deities of heaven. Malice turns us into beasts. Compassion turns us into bodhisattvas. Wisdom transports us to the higher realms, and ignorance sends us into the lower depths. Our nature is constantly transforming itself. But deluded people are unaware of this. Once we think of goodness, wisdom arises. One lamp can dispel a thousand years of darkness, and one thought of wisdom can end ten thousand years of ignorance. Don't think about what's past. Keep thinking about what's next. When your next thought is always good, this is what we call the realization body (sambhogakaya). One bad thought results in the destruction of a thousand years of good ones. But one good thought results in the annihilation of a thousand years of bad ones. In the face of impermanence, if your next thought is good, this is what we call

the realization body. The thoughts that come from the dharma body are your transformation body. And when every thought is good, this is your realization body. When you yourself become aware of this, and when you yourself cultivate this, this is called taking refuge. Your material body is made of flesh and bones. Your material body is but an inn and not a fit place of refuge. Just become aware of your three bodies, and you will understand what is truly important.

Yongjia's Song of Realizing the Way (Yoka Genkaku, eighth century)

(translated by Nelson Foster)

The real nature of ignorance is buddha-nature itself. The empty, illusory body is the very body of the Dharma. When the Dharma-body is realized, there's nothing at all. The original nature of all things is innately Buddha. Elements of the self come and go like clouds, without purpose. Greed, hate, and delusion appear and disappear like ocean foam. When you reach the heart of reality, you find neither self nor other, and even the worst kind of karma dissolves at once... Dust builds up on a mind-mirror not cleaned. With one decisive stroke now, lay the glass bare! Who is it that has no thought? Who is it that's unborn? It's as if really not born, yet not unborn either... Going straight to the root is the hallmark of the Buddha; picking up leaves and collecting branches is no use at all. Most people don't know the pearl that answers all wishes, the great pearl found in the treasure-house of the Tathagata (tathagata-garbha). Its miraculous workings are neither empty nor not empty, a single sphere of light without form yet not formless... The mind-mirror shines brilliantly, without obstruction, its light reaching worlds as countless as sands of the Ganges. The ten thousand things are all reflected here, illumined perfectly, neither inside nor outside... The mind, as a sense organ, takes all things as objects – a double blotch that darkens the mind-mirror – but the moment it's wiped it clean, the light shines again; mind and things both forgotten, true nature comes clear.

Shitou's Record (Sekito Kisen, eighth century)

(translated by Francis Cook)

You must realize that the substance of your own mind is beyond annihilation and eternity, and its nature is beyond purity and impurity. Deep and complete, it is the same in sages and ordinary people. It responds freely, and differs from ordinary (dualistic) mind in its various functions. The triple world and the six paths (of samsara) appear spontaneously as nothing but Mind. How can the reflection of the moon in water, or the shapes reflected in a mirror, originate or cease to be? If you can understand this, there is nothing you lack.

Shitou's Song of the Grass-Roof Hermitage

(translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton)

I've built a grass hut where there's nothing of value. After eating, I relax and enjoy a nap. When it was completed, fresh weeds appeared. Now it's been lived in – covered by weeds. The person in the hut lives here calmly, not stuck to inside, outside, or in between. Places worldly people live, he doesn't live. Realms worldly people love, he doesn't love. Though the hut is small, it includes the entire world. In ten square feet, an old man illumines forms and their nature. A Great Vehicle bodhisattva trusts without doubt. The middling or lowly can't help wondering; will this hut perish or not? Perishable or not, the original master is present, not dwelling south or north, east or west. Firmly based on steadiness, it can't be surpassed. A shining window below the green pines – jade palaces or vermilion towers can't compare with it. Just sitting with head covered, all things are at rest. Thus, this mountain monk doesn't understand at all. Living here he no longer works to get free. Who would proudly arrange seats, trying to entice guests? Turn around the light to shine within, then just return. The vast inconceivable source can't be faced or turned away from. Meet the ancestral teachers, be familiar with their instruction, bind grasses to build a hut, and don't give up. Let go of hundreds of years and relax completely. Open your hands and walk, innocent. Thousands of words, myriad interpretations, are only to free you from obstructions. If you want to know the undying person in the hut, don't separate from this skin bag here and now.

Dongshan's Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi (Tozan Ryokai, ninth century)

(translated by San Francisco Zen Center)

Turning away and touching are both wrong, for it is like a massive fire. Just to depict it in literary form is to stain it with defilement. It is bright just at midnight, it doesn't appear at dawn. It acts as a guide for beings, its use removes all pains. Although it is not fabricated, it is not without speech. It is like facing a jewel mirror; form and image behold each other – you are not it, in truth it is you. Like a babe in the world, in five aspects complete; it does not go or come, nor rise nor stand. “Baba wawa” – is there anything said or not? Ultimately it does not apprehend anything because its speech is not yet correct... With causal conditions, time and season, quiescently it shines bright. In its fineness it fits into spacelessness, in its greatness it is utterly beyond location. A hairsbreadth's deviation will fail to accord with the proper attunement.

Caoshan's Verse (Sozan Honjaku, ninth century)

(translated by Thomas Cleary)

The essence of awareness, round and bright, the body without form: do not force distance or closeness in knowledge and opinion. When thoughts differ, they obscure the mystic being; when mind diverges, it is not close to the Path. When feelings distinguish myriad things, you sink into the objects before you; when consciousness reflects many things, you lose the original reality. If you understand completely what is in these lines, clearly you are trouble free, as you were of yore.

Guishan's Record (Isan Reiyu, eighth century)

(translated by Thomas Cleary)

Yangshan asked Guishan, “What is the abode of the real Buddha?” Guishan said, “Using the subtlety of thinking without thought, think back to the infinity of the flames of awareness. When thinking comes to an end, return to the source, where essence and form are eternal and phenomenon and noumenon are nondual. The real Buddha is being-as-is.”

Mazu's Record (Baso Doitsu, eighth century)

(translated by Cheng Chien Bhikshu)

All of you should believe that your mind is Buddha, that this mind is identical with Buddha. The Great Master Bodhidharma came from India to China, and transmitted the One Mind teaching of Mahayana so that it can lead you all to awakening. Fearing that you will be too confused and will not believe that this One Mind is inherent in all of you, he used the Lankavatara Sutra to seal the sentient beings' mind-ground. Therefore, in the Lankavatara Sutra, mind is the essence of all the Buddha's teachings, no gate is the Dharma-gate... If one wants to know the Way directly: Ordinary Mind is the Way! What is meant by Ordinary Mind? No activity, no right or wrong, no grasping or rejecting, neither terminable nor permanent, without worldly or holy... The Way is identical with the dharmadhatu (universe). Out of sublime functions as numerous as the sands of Ganges, none of them is outside the dharmadhatu. If that was not so, how could it have been said that the mind-ground is a Dharma gate, that it is an inexhaustible lamp. All dharmas are mind dharmas; all names are mind names. The myriad dharmas are all born from the mind; the mind is the root of the myriad dharmas. The sutra says, 'It is because of knowing the mind and penetrating the original source that one is called a shramana (renunciant).'... The principle and phenomena are not different; everything is wonderful function, and there is no other principle. They all come from the mind. For instance, though the reflections of the moon are many, the real moon is only one. Though there are many springs of water, water has only one nature. There are myriad phenomena in the universe, but empty space is only one. There are many principles that are spoken of, but 'unobstructed wisdom is only one.' Whatever is established, it all comes from One Mind... Like a cloud in the sky that suddenly appears and then is gone without leaving any traces; also like writing on water, neither born nor perishable: that is the Great Nirvana. In bondage it is called tathagatagarbha; when liberated it is called the pure dharmakaya. Dharmakaya is boundless, its essence neither increasing nor decreasing. In order to respond to beings, it can manifest as big or small, square or round. It is like a reflection of the moon in

water. It functions smoothly without establishing roots. 'Not obliterating the conditioned; not dwelling in the unconditioned.' The conditioned is the function of the unconditioned; the unconditioned is the essence of the conditioned. Because of not dwelling on support, it has been said, 'Like space which rests on nothing.' The mind can be spoken of [in terms of its two aspects]: birth and death, and suchness. The mind as suchness is like a clear mirror which can reflect images. The mirror symbolizes the mind; the images symbolize the dharmas. If the mind grasps at dharmas, then it gets involved in external causes and conditions, which is the meaning of birth and death. If the mind does not grasp at dharmas, that is suchness. The Shravakas hear about the Buddha-nature, while the Bodhisattva's eye perceives the Buddha-nature. The realization of non-duality is called equal nature. Although the nature is free from differentiation, its function is not the same: when ignorant it is called consciousness; when awakened it is called wisdom. Following the principle is awakening, and following phenomena is ignorance. Ignorance is to be ignorant of one's original mind. Awakening is to awake to one's original nature.

Baizhang's Record (Hyakujo Ekai, ninth century)

(translated from the Chinese by Thomas Cleary)

If the immediate mirror awareness is just not concerned by anything at all, existent or nonexistent, and can pass through the three stages as well as through all things, pleasant or unpleasant, then even if one hears of a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, or a hundred million Buddhas appearing in the world, it is just as if one had not heard; yet one does not dwell in not hearing either, nor does one make an understanding of not dwelling... Originally you did not acknowledge that innate knowing and awareness are your own Buddha, and went running elsewhere to seek Buddha. So you needed a teacher to tell you about innate knowing and awareness as a medicine to cure this disease of hastily seeking outside. Once you no longer seek outwardly, the disease is cured and it is necessary to remove the medicine. If you cling fixedly to innate knowing awareness, this is a disease of meditation. Such is a thoroughgoing disciple; like water turned to ice, all the ice is water, but it can hardly be expected to quench thirst... This principle is originally present in everyone. All the Buddhas and bodhisattvas may be called people pointing out a jewel. Fundamentally it is not a thing—you don't need to know or understand it, you don't need to affirm or deny it. Just cut off dualism; cut off the supposition "it exists" and the supposition "it does not exist."... Just understand that the many things do not originate of themselves; all of them come into existence from one's own single mental impulse of imagination mistakenly clinging to appearances. If you know that mind and objects fundamentally do not contact each other, you will be set free on the spot. Each of the various things is in a state of quiescence right where it is; this very place is the site of enlightenment.

Huangbo's Transmission of Mind (Obaku Kiun, ninth century)

(translated by Thomas Cleary)

All buddhas and all living beings are only one mind; there is no other reality. This mind, from beginninglessness, has never been born and never passed away. It is neither blue nor yellow; it has no shape and no form. It does not belong to existence or nonexistence; it does not count as new or old. It is neither long nor short, neither large nor small. It transcends all limiting measurements, all labels, all traces, all oppositions. This very being is it; when you stir thoughts, you turn away from it. It is like space, which has no boundaries and cannot be measured. This one mind is itself buddha. Buddha and sentient beings are no different; it's just that sentient beings seek externally, grasping appearances, losing the more they seek. If you try to have buddha seek buddha, or use mind to grasp mind, you will never succeed. What you don't realize is that if you stop thoughts and forget ruminations, the buddha spontaneously appears. This mind itself is buddha; buddhas are sentient beings. As sentient beings, this mind is not diminished; as buddhas, this mind is not increased. Even the six perfections, myriad practices, and countless virtues are inherent and do not need to be added by cultivation; when the appropriate circumstances are encountered they are employed, and when those circumstances end they rest... Buddhas, sentient beings, and the one mind are no different, like space without adulteration or corruption, like the orb of the sun illumining the four quarters. When the sun rises, its light pervades the land, but

space is never bright. When the sun sets, darkness covers the land, but space is never dark. States of light and darkness alternate, but the nature of space remains open and empty, unchanging. So it is also with buddhas, sentient beings, and mind. If you contemplate buddhas as forms of pure illumination and liberation, and you contemplate sentient beings as forms of muddled living and dying in the dark, with this understanding you will never ever attain enlightenment, because you are attached to appearances. It's just this one mind; there is nothing else at all to attain. Mind itself is buddha. People who study the Way today do not understand the essence of this mind, so they conceive of another mind on top of this mind, seeking buddhahood externally, cultivating practices attached to appearances. All of this is wrong; it is not the way to enlightenment.

Linji's Record (Rinzai Gigen, ninth century)

(translated by Burton Watson)

The Master ascended the hall and said, "Here in this lump of red flesh there is a True Person with no rank (position). Constantly he goes in and out the gates of your face. If there are any of you who don't know this for a fact, then look! Look!" At that time there was a monk who came forward and asked, "What is he like - the True Person with no rank?" The Master got down from his chair, seized hold of the monk and said, "Speak! Speak!" The monk was about to say something, whereupon the Master let go of him, shoved him away, and said, "True Person with no rank – what a shitty ass-wiper!" The Master then returned to his quarters... If you want to be no different from the patriarchs and buddhas, then never look for something outside yourselves. The clear pure light in a moment of your mind – that is the Essence-body (dharmakaya) of the Buddha lodged in you. The undifferentiated light in a moment of your mind – that is the Bliss-body (sambhogakaya) of the Buddha lodged in you. The indiscriminating light in a moment of your mind – that is the Transformation-body (nirmanakaya) of the Buddha lodged in you. These three types of bodies are you, the person who stands before me now listening to this lecture on the Dharma! And simply because you do not rush around seeking anything outside yourselves, you can command these fine faculties... Followers of the Way, this thing called mind has no fixed form; it penetrates all the ten directions. In the eye we call it sight; in the ear we call it hearing; in the nose it detects odors, in the mouth it speaks discourse; in the hand it grasps, in the feet it runs along. Basically it is a single bright essence, but it divides itself into these six functions. And because this single mind has no fixed form, it is everywhere in a state of emancipation. Why do I tell you this? Because you followers of the Way seem to be incapable of stopping this mind that goes rushing around everywhere looking for something. So you get caught up in those idle devices of the men of old... Followers of the Way, this lone brightness before my eyes now, this person plainly listening to me – this person is unimpeded at any point but penetrates the ten directions, free to do as he pleases in the threefold world. No matter what the environment he may encounter, with its peculiarities and differences, he cannot be swayed or pulled away.

Nanquan's Record (Gateless Barrier case 19, Nansen Fugan, ninth century)

(translated by Kokyo Henkel)

Zhaozhou asked Nanquan, "What is the Way?" Nanquan replied, "Ordinary mind is the Way."

Should I try to direct myself toward (try for) it?" Zhaozhou asked.

"If you try to direct yourself, you will become separated from it," responded Nanquan.

"How can I know the Way unless I direct myself?" persisted Zhaozhou.

Nanquan said, "The Way is not a matter of knowing or not knowing. Knowing is delusion; not knowing is confusion (blankness). When you have really reached the true Way beyond doubt, you will find it as vast and boundless as space. How can this be talked about on the level of right and wrong (affirmation and negation)?" With these words, Zhaozhou came to a sudden realization.

Changsha's Record (Chosa Keishin, ninth century)

(translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi)

The entire world of the ten directions is a single eye of a monk.

The entire world of the ten directions is the everyday words of a monk.

The entire world of the ten directions is the whole body of a monk.

The entire world of the ten directions is the radiant light of the self.

The entire world of the ten directions is within the radiant light of the self.

In the entire world of the ten directions, there is no single person that is not the self.

Yunmen's Record (Blue Cliff Record case 86, Ummon Bunen, tenth century)

(translated by J.C. and Thomas Cleary)

Everyone has a light; when you look at it, you don't see it and it's dark and obscure. What is everybody's light? The kitchen pantry and the main gate.

Yuanwu's Letters (Engo Kokugon, eleventh century)

(translated by J.C. and Thomas Cleary)

Fundamentally, this great light is there with each and every person right where they stand – empty clear through, spiritually aware, all-pervasive, it is called “the scenery of the fundamental ground.” Sentient beings and buddhas are both inherently equipped with it. It is perfectly fluid and boundless, fusing everything within it. It is within your own heart and is the basis of your physical body and of the five clusters of form, sensation, conception, motivational synthesis, and consciousness. It has never been defiled or stained, and its fundamental nature is still and silent. False thoughts suddenly arise and cover it over and block it off and confine it within the six sense faculties and sense objects. Sense faculties and sense objects are paired off, and you get stuck and begin clinging and getting attached. You grasp at all the various objects and scenes, and produce all sorts of false thoughts, and sink down into the toils of birth and death, unable to gain liberation... The most important thing is for people of great faculties and sharp wisdom to turn the light of mind around and shine back and clearly awaken to this mind before a single thought is born. This mind can produce all world-transcending and worldly phenomena. When it is forever stamped with enlightenment, your inner heart is independent and transcendent and brimming over with life. As soon as you rouse your conditioned mind and set errant thoughts moving, then you have obscured this fundamental clarity. If you want to pass through easily and directly right now, just let your body and mind become thoroughly empty, so it is vacant and silent, yet aware and luminous. Inwardly, forget all your conceptions of self, and outwardly, cut off all sensory defilements. When inside and outside are clear all the way through, there is just one true reality. Then eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and conceptual mind, form, sound, smell, flavor, touch, and conceptualized phenomena – all of these are established based on that one reality. This one reality stands free of and transcends all the myriad entangling phenomena. The myriad phenomena have never had any fixed characteristics – they are all transformations based on this light. If you can trust in this oneness, then with one comprehended, all are comprehended, and with one illuminated, all are illuminated. Then in whatever you do, it can all be the indestructible true essence of great liberation from top to bottom.

All the myriad things are neither opposed to nor contrary to your true self. Directly pass through to freedom and they make one whole. It has been this way from time without beginning... If you can cut off clinging to objects and inwardly forget your false ideas of self, things themselves are the true self, and the true self itself is things: things and true self are one suchness, opening through to infinity.

Hongzhi's Record (Wanshi Shogaku, twelfth century)

(translated by Taigen Daniel Leighton with Yi Wu)

Acupuncture Needle of Zazen

The essential function of all buddhas, the functional essence of all ancestors,
is to know without touching things and to illuminate without encountering objects.
Knowing without touching things, this knowledge is innately subtle.
Illuminating without encountering objects, this illumination is innately miraculous.
The knowledge innately subtle has never engaged in discriminating thinking.
The illumination innately miraculous has never displayed the slightest identification.
Never engaging in discriminating thinking, this knowledge is rare without match.
Never displaying the most minute identification, this illumination is complete without grasping.
The water is clear right down to the bottom, fish lazily swim on.
The sky is vast without end, birds fly far into the distance.

The field of bright spirit is an ancient wilderness that does not change. With boundless eagerness wander around this immaculate wide plain. The drifting clouds embrace the mountain; the family wind is relaxed and simple. The autumn waters display the moon in its pure brightness. Directly arriving here you will be able to recognize the mind ground dharma field that is the root source of the ten thousand forms germinating with unwithered fertility. These flowers and leaves are the whole world. So we are told that a single seed is an uncultivated field. Do not weed out the new shoots, and the self will flower.

The dharma realm in the ten directions arises from the single mind. When the single mind is still, all appearances are entirely exhausted. Which one is over there? Which one is myself? Only when you do not differentiate forms, suddenly not a single dust is established, not a single recollection is produced. Discern that even before the pregnant womb and after your skin bag, each moment is astonishing radiance, full and round without direction or corners, discarding trifles. Where truly nothing can be obscured is called self-knowledge. Only thus knowing the self is called original realization, not even a hair received undeservingly. Magnificent, subtly maintaining uniqueness, genuine hearing is without sound. So it is said that perceiving without eye or ear is where the wonder is verified and fulfilled. Light streams forth from there and many thousands of images appear. Every being is actually it, altogether in the realm where patch-robed monks function on their own. It is essential only not to borrow from other people's homes. To cultivate our house you must clearly and intimately experience it for yourself.

Dogen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye (thirteenth century)

The Mind Itself Is Buddha

(Shobogenzo Sokushin Zebutsu, translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Steve Allen)

The mind itself is buddha, which has been maintained by buddha ancestors, is not something those outside of the way or practitioners of the Two Lesser Vehicles can even dream of. Only buddha ancestors together with buddha ancestors have been actualizing and penetrating *the mind itself is buddha*... The mind that has been authentically transmitted is: one mind is all things, all things are one mind. Thus, an ancient teacher said, "If you realize this mind, there is not an inch of land left on earth." Know that when you realize this mind, the entire sky collapses and the whole earth explodes. Or, if you realize this mind, the earth raises its surface by three inches. An ancient master [Guishan] asked, "What is the wondrous clear mind?" [Yangshan said] "I say it is mountains, rivers and the earth; it is the sun, the moon, and the stars." Thus, we know that the mind is mountains, rivers and the earth; the mind is the sun, the moon, and the stars. What is said here is not more, not less. The mountains, rivers, and the earth mind are just the mountains, rivers, and the earth. There are no extra waves or spray [in this mind]. The sun, the moon, and the stars mind is just the sun, the moon, and the stars. There is no extra fog or mist. The coming and going of birth and death mind is just the coming and going of birth and death. There is no extra delusion or enlightenment. The walls, tiles, and pebbles mind is just the walls, tiles, and pebbles. There is no extra

mud or water. The four great elements and the five skandhas mind are just the four great elements and the five skandhas. There is no extra horse or monkey. The chair and whisk mind is just the chair and whisk. There is no extra bamboo or wood.

Ungraspable Mind (later version)

(Shobogenzo Go Shin Fukatoku, translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Michael Wenger)

There is buddha mind that is walls, tiles, and pebbles. Buddhas in the past, present, and future realize it as ungraspable. Walls, tiles, and pebbles are just buddha mind. Buddhas in the past, present, and future realize them as ungraspable. Furthermore, the ungraspableness of mountains, rivers, and the great earth is within the self; the ungraspableness is the mind. There is also the ungraspableness of “with no place to abide, the mind emerges” (from Diamond Sutra). All buddhas in the ten directions expound eighty thousand dharma gates in each lifetime. The mind that is ungraspable is like this... In studying the mind in the buddha way, all things are mind, the three realms are mind only, mind only is mind only, buddha is mind. Do not mistake the mind of the self or of other in the buddha way... In this buddha way, the entire earth is all mind; it does not change by appearing and disappearing. The entire dharma is all mind. Understand the entire mind as mastery of wisdom.

Buddha-Nature

(Shobogenzo Bussho, translated by Norman Waddell and Masao Abe)

Entire being is the Buddha-nature... You must understand the "being" that the Buddha-nature makes "whole being" is not the being of being and nonbeing. "Whole being" is a Buddha's words, a Buddha's tongue, the pupils of Buddhas' and ancestors' eyes, the nostrils of Zen monks. Nor does the term "whole being" mean emergent being; nor is it original being, or mysterious being, or anything of the like. And it is of course not conditioned being or illusory being. It has nothing to do with such things as mind and object, substance and form... The Twelfth Patriarch Ashvaghosha, in expounding the "Buddha-nature Sea" for the sake of the Thirteenth Patriarch, said: "The forming of mountains, rivers, the great earth itself, is totally dependent on the Buddha-nature. Samadhi and the six supernatural powers are being revealed through the Buddha-nature." In this way, mountains, rivers, and the great earth are all the Buddha-nature Sea. *The forming of mountains, rivers, the great earth itself, is totally dependent* means that the very time they are being formed is mountains, rivers, and the great earth. As for *the forming is totally dependent on the Buddha-nature*, you should know that the mode of the Buddha-nature Sea is like this. It is not concerned with inner or outer or in-between. As the Buddha-nature Sea is like this, seeing mountains and rivers is seeing the Buddha-nature... Grass and tree, nation and state are mind. Because they are mind, they are sentient being. Because they are sentient being, they are being Buddha-nature. Sun, moon, stars, and planets are mind. Because they are mind, they are sentient being. Because they are sentient being, they are being Buddha-nature... For infinite kalpas past, foolish people in great number have regarded the consciousness mind as the Buddha-nature. They have regarded it as the "original person" – how laughably absurd! In making further utterances about the Buddha-nature – and this won't be a case of "entering the water and getting covered with mud" – the Buddha-nature is a fence, a wall, a tile, a pebble. When making an utterance beyond this [you can only say] "What is this Buddha-nature?"

Awesome Presence of Active Buddhas

(Shobogenzo Gyobutsu Iigi, translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Taigen Leighton)

Thoroughly practicing, thoroughly clarifying, is not forced. It is just like recognizing the shadow of deluded thought and turning the light around to shine within. The clarity of clarity beyond clarity prevails in the activity of buddhas. This is totally surrendering to practice. To understand the meaning of totally surrendering, you should thoroughly investigate mind. In the steadfastness of thorough investigation, all phenomena are the unadorned clarity of mind.

Body-and-Mind Study of the Way

(Shobogenzo Shinjin Gakudo, translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Dan Welch)

Now mountains, rivers, earth, the sun, the moon, and stars are mind. At just this moment, what is it that appears directly in front of you? When we say, "mountains, rivers, and earth" we do not merely mean the mountains, rivers, and earth where you are standing... The sun, moon, and stars as seen by humans and devas are not the same, and the views of various beings differ widely. Views about one mind differ as well. Yet these views are nothing but mind. Is it inside or outside? Does it come or go? Is there more of it at birth or not? Is there less of it at death or not? How do we understand this birth and death, and views of birth and death? All this is merely a moment or two of mind. A moment or two of mind is a moment of mountains, rivers, and earth, or two moments of mountains, rivers, and earth. Because mountains, rivers, earth, and so forth neither exist nor do not exist, they are not large or small, not attainable or unattainable, not knowable or unknowable, not penetrable or impenetrable.

Only Buddha and Buddha

(Shobogenzo Yuibutsu Yobutsu, translated by Kazuaki Tanahashi and Ed Brown)

To seek to know the self is always the wish of living beings. However, those who see the true self are rare. Only buddhas know the true self. People outside the Way regard what is not the self as the self. On the other hand, what buddhas call the self is the entire earth. Thus, there is never an entire universe that is not the self, with or without our knowing it. On this matter, refer to the words of the ancient buddhas. Long ago a monk asked a master, "When hundreds, thousands, or myriads of objects come all at once, what should be done?" The master replied, "Don't try to control them." What he means is that in whatever way objects come, do not try to change them. Whatever comes is the buddha dharma, not objects at all. Do not understand the master's reply as merely a brilliant admonition, but realize that it is the truth. Even if you try to control what comes, it cannot be controlled. An ancient buddha said, "The mountains, rivers, and earth are born at the same moment with each person. All buddhas of the past, present, and future are practicing together with each person."

Ejo's Absorption in the Treasury of Light (thirteenth century)

(translated by Thomas Cleary)

I humbly say to comrades who have the same true aspiration, don't hold onto a single state or device, don't rely on intellectual understanding, don't keep what you have learned in meditation; cast your body and mind into the great treasury of light and never look back. Don't seek enlightenment, don't try to get rid of delusion, don't be averse to thoughts arising, don't fondly continue thoughts. "Just sit grandly under the eaves"; if you don't continue thoughts, they cannot arise by themselves. Just be like space, like a mass of fire; just breathe naturally in and out and sit through everything without getting involved. Even if eighty-four thousand random thoughts arise and vanish, if one doesn't get involved with them and thoroughly relinquishes them, each thought will be the light of the spiritual power of wisdom. This doesn't apply only to sitting. Each step is the walking of light, each step not engaging in subjective thinking. Twenty-four hours a day being like someone who has utterly died, there is no view of self and no false discrimination at all. Nevertheless, the breath goes out and in, and the nature of hearing and feeling being without cognition or discrimination, body and mind are one suchness in the unified light silently shining – therefore one responds when called. This is the light of one suchness of ordinary and holy, delusion and enlightenment. Though it is within activity, it is not hindered by activity. Forests, flowers, grasses, and leaves, people and animals, large and small, long and short, square and round – all manifest at once without any conscious discrimination or will. This is the proof that the light is not obstructed by activity; the empty luminosity shines by itself without exerting mental energy. This light fundamentally has no abode: though Buddhas appear in the world, it does not appear in the world, though Buddhas enter nirvana, it does not enter nirvana. When you are born, the light isn't born and when you die, the light doesn't disappear. It is not more in Buddhas, not less in sentient beings. It is not deluded when you are deluded, it does not become enlightened when you awaken. It has no location, no sign, or

name. It is the totality of everything. It cannot be grasped or abandoned or attained. While unattainable, it is in effect throughout the entire being; from the highest heaven to the lowest hell, it is just thus, complete and clear, the wondrously inconceivable spiritual light.

Keizan's Transmission of Light (fourteenth century)

(translated by Francis Cook)

32nd Ancestor Hongren

Now, fundamentally, practicing Zen and learning the Way is for the sake of reaching the fundamental and clarifying the nature of Mind. If you do not reach the fundamental, you are born and die in vain, deluded about self and others. As for so-called "intrinsic nature," you people die and die, and are born again and again. Even though face after face and body after body is different, never for a moment are you lacking in completely clear knowing... Once you are able to clarify this realm, even though you change forms and move from life to life, how can that hinder the Self or alter Mind?

34th Ancestor Qingyuan

Look carefully – this bright, empty realm is brighter than the rising sun. Even though this vast, marvelous, true nature is not an object of discrimination, it possesses complete, perfect, clear understanding. Though it is not bound by bones and marrow, it has a bright body that is not covered or hidden. This body cannot be discerned through motion or stillness, nor can its knowing be discerned through ordinary awareness and understanding. Since ordinary knowing is also this wisdom, motion and stillness are also nothing else [than this]. Even bodhisattvas who reach the tenth stage by stages still do not see Buddha nature really clearly. Why? The Buddha said, "Because they postulate an essence of things and establish practices [apart from ordinary activities], they do not see Buddha nature clearly. Because, for Buddhas, there are ultimately no practices and no realm of essence, they see Buddha nature thoroughly." In the eighth book of the Great Nirvana Scripture, in the chapter, "Awakening of the Tathagata Nature," it says, "Although innumerable bodhisattvas are endowed with all the perfections and practice the ten stages, they still are unable to see their own Buddha nature. The Buddha has consequently said that their views are deficient. Thus, good sons, the bodhisattva on the tenth stage still does not clearly know or see Buddha nature, so how much less are disciples or self-enlightened people able to see it?" With no reliance on seeing and hearing, and with no reliance on an external world or use of the thinking mind, just try to look beneath them. There will surely be an unexpected realization of an alert knowing not gotten from someone else.

38th Ancestor Dongshan

Thus, good people, by inspecting fully, you become keenly aware of this subtle consciousness; it is called "nonsentient." It is called "nonsentient" because there is no running off after sounds and forms, and no bondage to passionate consciousness. This principle must be preached carefully. Therefore, when you hear preaching about the nonsentient, do not think that this refers to fences and walls. It is simply that when you are not attached to emotion and thought, and your perceptions are not scattered, the subtle consciousness is clear and unobscured, clearly and distinctly bright. Even though you attempt to grasp this realm, it is not possible. Since it is not bound by form, it does not exist. Even though you attempt to get rid of it, you cannot leave it. Since it has accompanied you since time immemorial, it is not nonexistent. Still, it is not the working of consciousness, knowing, or thought, much less something connected to the four elements or five aggregates. Hung-chih said, "There is a knowing apart from passionate thought and discrimination; there is a body that is not the four elements and five aggregates." That is, it is the subtle consciousness. "Always preaching keenly" means that its manifestation at all times is "preaching." It makes one raise one's eyebrows and blink. It makes one walk, stand, sit, and lie down, be confused, get into trouble, die here and be born there, eat when hungry and sleep when tired – all these without exception are "preaching." Speech, work, movement, and cessation of movement are also "preaching." It is not just a verbal or nonverbal preaching; it is That One who appears magnificently, is very bright, and never dark. Since it is revealed in everything, including the croaking of bullfrogs and the sounds of earthworms, it constantly preaches keenly without cessation. If you can see it fully, then someday, like our eminent Patriarch, Tung-shan, you will be able to be an example for others.

40th Ancestor Dongan

Even though you mistakenly look for your own head, this [looking, itself] is your head. As the founder Eihei [Dogen] said, "Who am I? I am the one who asks 'who'."... The winds [of discrimination] cannot enter this place of knowing. Thus, people, when you penetrate it thoroughly and fully, [you will realize that] you have possessed it since time immemorial and that it has not been absent for a second. Even though you seek it through thought, that [itself] is the Self and nothing else. Even reflecting inwardly on yourself is not discrimination; it is Self and not something new. Using eyes, ears, and mouth, opening your hand and moving your feet – these are all Self. Fundamentally, it is not grasped with hands or seen by the eyes. Therefore, it cannot be discussed in terms of sounds and forms, and it is not approached with ears and eyes. When you see it fully, you will doubtlessly know that there is an "I" and know that there is a Self. If you want to know this place, when you toss out right and wrong for the first time and do not depend on others or get involved with them, this Mind shines naturally with a brightness brighter than the sun and moon. Its purity is purer than frost and snow. Thus, it is not blind, unaware of right and wrong. This Self is spontaneously manifested pure and bright. People, do not think that there is no one apart from speech, silence, movement, and stillness, or no one unconnected with skin, flesh, bones, and marrow... When you finally arrive and settle properly in the true reality, you will not be able to say that it exists, because it is empty and clear. You will not be able to say that it is nonexistent because it is bright and keenly aware. It cannot be discriminated with the body, mouth, or mind, nor can it be discerned with mind, conceptualization, or perception.

46th Ancestor Tanxia

Even though Buddha after Buddha and patriarch after patriarch has changed in appearance, there is without doubt something that has been transmitted which is without front and back, without up and down, without inside or outside, without self or other. It is called, "non-empty emptiness." It is the true place to which all must return. There is none who does not possess it fully. However, many students mistakenly think that it is original nonbeing which cannot be expressed or conceived. The ancients called such people "non-buddhists who fall into nothingness." Even after the lapse of eons as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River, they will never be liberated. Even if you are thorough and meticulous, and by all means put an end to all things and make them utterly empty, there is still something that cannot be emptied. Investigating carefully, if you once get a peek at it, you will surely be able to get hold of a phrase to express it.

49th Ancestor Xuedou

Monks, you should know that there is Someone who is not only speechless but also mouthless. Not only is He mouthless but He also has no eyes. From the beginning, He has not possessed a hair's worth of the four elements and six senses. Though it is like this, it is not emptiness, nor is it nothingness. Even though you say you see things and hear sounds, it is not your eyes seeing or your ear hearing; it is this Faceless Fellow doing it. Your mind and body were provided by this Fellow. Therefore, the mind and body are not at all created things. If you haven't reached this point, then you may think that your body was created as a result of your parents, and that your body is a result of karma. Thus, you may think that your body resulted from the union of sperm and egg, or that your body is covered with skin and flesh. This is because you have not thoroughly clarified Self. In order to get you to know this realm, spiritual teachers use unlimited means to get you to put an end to the six senses and stop everything. At such a time, there is something that cannot be destroyed, something that cannot be crushed. When you become aware of it, it surely cannot be reduced to emptiness or existence, nor is it bright or dark. Therefore, it is hard to talk about whether you are deluded or enlightened. For this reason, this realm is not called "Buddha," "Dharma," "Mind," or "essential nature." It is nothing but bright light existing brilliantly. Therefore, it is not the light of fire or the light of water; it is just boundless clarity and brightness. You cannot see it, though you try; nor can you acquire it, though you try. It is just alertness. When the three disasters of water, fire, and wind occur, and the world is destroyed, it is not destroyed. When the triple world and its six paths arise [again]... and the myriad things sprout profusely, this thing does not change. Even Buddhas do not know what to make of it; even patriarchs do not know what to make of it. O monks, if you want to

reach this realm in person, you must close your eyes for a while, regulate your breathing, forget your body, have no place to lodge your body, have no need for any relationship with things, become like a cloudless blue sky, and become like the great ocean without waves. Then you will have some experience of It. At this time, even though Buddha patriarchs cannot figure you out, there is a bright light. It is not like the moon in the dark sky, or like the sun. The whole sky becomes the moon, and there is nothing else [remaining] to be illuminated. The whole universe becomes sun, and there is nowhere to shine. You must experience this completely... It exists with you from the beginning but, if you still want to reach it, you must use your power. Though no one is without it, people are deluded by their eyes [and other senses]. How much more pitiful it is that they transmigrate ever so long. Just look carefully, forgetting the senses and their objects. Have no recourse to mind or consciousness, and you will surely reach it. You do not have to reach it gradually [by stages]. Once you arouse your determination with all your power, you will experience it. Even though it is brief, just immediately become aware of the source, without giving rise to partial understanding, and you will reach it. Once you reach it, just as if you were standing on four feet, you will not be moved by the eight winds. The ancients said, "Learning the Way is like making fire by rubbing two sticks together. Do not stop a second when you see smoke." Once you exert all your power, you will get fire. What is "smoke"? When you encounter the skill of a spiritual teacher, and not a single thought arises, this is when you see smoke. If you stop here and rest, it is like stopping at warmth; but if you continue on, you will see fire. This means knowing the One who does not give rise to a single thought. If you are not thoroughly aware of the Self, then even though it seems that you have found some rest now, and in so doing you are like a withered tree, you are nothing but a corpse whose spirit has not dispersed [but has no power]. Therefore, if you want to personally experience this realm, you must practice with everything you have... It is called the indestructible (vajra) hidden body. That body is empty and bright.

52nd Ancestor Dogen

You must first clarify Mind. In the situation where [Dogen] first acquired the Way, it was said that practicing Zen is dropping off body and mind. Truly, the practice of Zen consists of abandoning [attachment to] the body and leaving [ordinary] mind behind. If body and mind have not been dropped off, it is not the Way. You may think that the body is skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, but when you see thoroughly, not a hair's tip of them can be found. People think that there are two kinds of "mind." One is mind as thought and discrimination, and this consciousness which discriminates [external events]. The second is mind that is still and unmoving, and does not know or understand a thing, the mind of purity and stillness. People do not understand that such a mind is still not exempt from being the root of [discriminating] consciousness. The ancients referred to it as the place of deep inner brightness that is unmoved. Do not mistake this for Mind and abide there. Looking more carefully, "mind" is of three kinds: mind, thought, and consciousness. "Consciousness" (mano-vijnana) is mind which likes and dislikes, affirms and denies. "Thought" (manas) cognizes warm and cold and is aware of pain or tickle. "Mind" (alaya-vijnana) does not discern right and wrong, nor is it aware of pain or tickle. It is like a wall, or like wood or stone. It can be thought of as truly still, as if it had no ears or eyes. Therefore, speaking from the vantage point of mind, it is like a manikin made of wood, or a human figure made of iron. Though you have eyes, you do not see; though you have ears, you do not hear. At this point, words do not do it justice. Although such a thing is mind, it is the seed of cognition of warmth, coldness, and awareness of pain and tickle. Thought and consciousness arise from it. Do not make the mistake of thinking that it is fundamental Mind. Learning the Way is said to be apart from mind, thought, and consciousness. These must not be thought of as body and mind. There is still a wonderful brightness that is eternally unmoving. If you look carefully, you will certainly reach it. If you are able to clarify this Mind, no body and mind can be found; no self and others can be involved. Therefore, it is said, "Drop off body and mind." At this point, if you look intensely, even with a thousand eyes, there is not an atom of anything called skin, flesh, bones, and marrow; nothing to be discriminated as mind, thought, or consciousness. How can you [then] be aware of warmth and cold or discern pain or tickle? What is there to affirm or deny? What is there to like or dislike? Therefore, it is said, "When you look, nothing is there." When [Dogen] personally

experienced this place, he said, "body and mind are dropped off." [Rujing] confirmed this, saying, "body and mind have dropped off, the dropped-off body and mind." Finally, he said, "the dropping off has dropped off." Once you reach this realm, you become like a bottomless bucket, like a lacquer bowl with a hole punched in it. No matter how much leaks out, it is never empty; no matter how much is put into it, it is never full. Arriving at this occasion is called "the bottom falling out of the bucket." If you think that there is a hair of enlightenment or acquisition [here], it is not the Way. It is nothing but toying with the spirit. Monks, experience it thoroughly with yourselves. Investigate it fully, and you will find that there is a body unbound by skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. Though you ultimately try to liberate this body, liberation is not possible. Though you try to abandon it, you cannot. Therefore, in speaking of this place [patriarchal teachers] say, "When everything is utterly emptied out, there is something that cannot be emptied." If you can clarify this thoroughly, you will never doubt all the venerable priests in the world or all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future.

53rd Ancestor Ejo

Even though the myriad things are extinguished, there remains something that is not extinguished. Even though everything is gone, there is something that is not exhausted. It turns out to be as expected, naturally. Utterly empty, it is marvelously bright by nature. Therefore, it is said to be pure and naked, empty and spotless, obvious, bright, and shining. There is not a hair of doubt, not a whisker of false thought. It is brighter than a billion suns and moons. You cannot say it is white, you cannot say it is red. It is like waking from a dream. It is simply vivid alertness within yourself, so we call it "vivid alertness." Calling it "alertness" means just that you are very awake.

Chinul's Complete Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood (thirteenth century)

(translated by Robert Buswell)

Now I aim solely to induce ordinary people of great aspiration to look back on the radiance of the one true Dharma-realm which is their own mind's fundamental wisdom of universal brightness. They will then be able to awaken to the fact that, although the names of the Buddhas in the ten directions are different... these are the form and functioning of their minds' wisdom of universal brightness; they are not external things.

Chinul's Secrets of Cultivating the Mind (thirteenth century)

(translated by Thomas Cleary)

We know that there is no Buddhahood to attain apart from this mind. The Realized Ones of the past were just people who understood the mind, and the saints and sages of the present are people who cultivate the mind; students of the future should rely on this principle. People who practice the Way should not seek externally. The essence of mind has no defilement; it is originally complete and perfect of itself. Just detach from illusory objects, and it is enlightened to suchness as is... By what expedient means can we turn our minds around instantly to realize our inherent essence? It is just your own mind; what further expedient means would you apply? If you apply expedient means to go on to seek intellectual understanding, this is like wanting to see your own eyes because you think you have no eyes if you cannot see them. As long as you have not lost them, that is called seeing eyes. If you have no more desire to see, does that mean you imagine you are not seeing? So it is also with one's own open awareness. Since it is one's own mind, how can one yet seek to see it? If you seek understanding, then you do not understand it. Just know that which does not understand; this is seeing essence... All things are like dreams, like illusions or magical effects; therefore errant thoughts are basically silent, while material objects are basically empty. The emptiness of all things is not obscure to open awareness; so this mind with open awareness of silence and emptiness is your own original countenance. It is also the seal of Dharma esoterically transmitted by the Buddhas of past, present, and future, the Zen Masters of successive generations, and all genuine teachers in the world.

Bassui's One Mind (fourteenth century)

(translated by Eido Shimano)

If you would free yourself of the sufferings of the Six Realms, you must learn the direct way to become a Buddha. This way is no other than the realization of your own Mind. Now what is this Mind? It is the true nature of all sentient beings, that which existed before our parents were born and hence before our own birth, and which presently exists, unchangeable and eternal. So it is called one's face before one's parents were born. This Mind is intrinsically pure. When we are born it is not newly created, and when we die it does not perish. It has no distinction of male or female, nor has it any coloration of good or bad. It cannot be compared with anything, so it is called Buddha-nature. Yet countless thoughts issue from this Self-nature as waves arise in the ocean or as images are reflected in a mirror. If you want to realize your own Mind, you must first of all look into the source from which thoughts flow. Sleeping and working, standing and sitting, profoundly ask yourself, "What is my own Mind?" with an intense yearning to resolve this question. This is called "training" or "practice" or "desire for truth" or "thirst for realization." What is termed Zazen is no more than looking into one's own mind.

Bankei's Record (seventeenth century)

(translated by Norman Waddell)

Because of the unbornness and marvelous illuminative power inherent in the Buddha-mind, it readily reflects all things that come along and transforms itself into them, thus turning the Buddha-mind into thought... If anyone confirms that this unborn, illuminative wisdom is in fact the Buddha-mind and straightaway lives, as he is, in the Buddha-mind, he becomes at that moment a living Tathagata, and he remains one for infinite kalpas in the future. Once he has confirmed it, he lives from then on in the mind of all the Buddhas, which is the reason the sect I belong to has sometimes been called the "Buddha-mind" sect. While you face this way listening to me now, if a sparrow chirps behind you, you don't mistake it for a crow; you don't mistake the sound of a bell for that of a drum, or hear a man's voice and take it for a woman's, or take an adult's voice for a child's. You hear and distinguish those different sounds, without making a single mistake, by virtue of the marvelous working of illuminative wisdom. This is the proof that the Buddha-mind is unborn and wonderfully illuminating. None of you could say that you heard the sounds because you had made up your minds to hear them beforehand. If you did, you wouldn't be telling the truth. All of you are looking this way intent upon hearing me. You're concentrating single-mindedly on listening. There's no thought in any of your minds to hear the sounds or noises that might occur behind you. You are able to hear and distinguish sounds when they do occur without consciously intending to hear them because you're listening by means of the unborn Buddha-mind... Because of the Buddha-mind's wonderful illuminative wisdom, such things as you have done and experienced in the past cannot fail to be reflected in it. If you fix onto those images as they reflect, you are unwittingly creating illusion. The thoughts do not already exist at the place where those images are reflecting; they are caused by your past experiences and occur when things you have seen and heard in the past are reflected on the Buddha-mind. But thoughts originally have no real substance. So if they are reflected, you should just let them be reflected, and let them arise when they arise. Don't have any thought to stop them. If they stop, let them stop. Don't pay any attention to them. Leave them alone. Then illusions won't appear. And since there are no illusions when you don't take note of the reflecting images, while the images may be reflected in the mind, it's just the same as if they weren't. A thousand thoughts may arise, yet it's just as though they hadn't. They won't give you a bit of trouble. You won't have any thoughts to clear from your mind—not a single thought to cut off.

Hakuin's Four Cognitions (eighteenth century)

(translated by Thomas Cleary)

What is the universal mirror cognition? When you want to comprehend this great matter, first you must develop great will and great faith; determined to see into your inherent Buddha-nature, you should constantly ask yourself who is hosting your seeing and hearing. No matter what you are doing, whether

you are walking, standing still, sitting down, or lying down, whether you are active or silent, whether you are in pleasant circumstances or unpleasant situations, plunge your spirit into this question: what is it that sees everything here and now? What is it that hears? Questioning like this, pondering like this, wondering what it is, when you keep on wondering continuously, driven by courage and conscience, your effort will naturally become unified and solid, turning into a single mass of wonder pervading the universe. Your spirit is suffocated, your mind in distress, like a bird in a cage, like a rat that's crawled into a bamboo tube and cannot turn around. At that time, if you keep on going without retreating, it will be like entering a crystal world: the whole mass, inside and outside, floors and ceilings, houses and buildings, fields and mountains, grasses and trees, people and animals, utensils and goods, are all as it were like illusions, like dreams, like shadows, like mist. When you open your eyes with clear presence of mind and see with certainty, there appears an inconceivable realm that seems to exist yet also seems nonexistent in a way. This is called the time when the nature of consciousness becomes manifest. If you think this is wonderful and extraordinary, and you gladly become infatuated and attached to this experience, after all you will fall into the nests of the two vehicles of individual deliverance, or of outsiders, or of troublesome devils, and you will never see the real Buddha-nature. At this point, if you do not cling to your state, but instead arouse your spirit to wholehearted effort, from time to time you will experience such things as forgetting you're sitting when you're sitting, forgetting you're standing when you're standing, forgetting your own body, forgetting the world around you. If you then keep going without retreating, the conscious spirit will shatter and the Buddha-nature will appear all at once. This is called the universal mirror cognition. This is the meaning of complete perfect enlightenment at the first stage of inspiration. You can discern the source of the eighty thousand doctrines and their infinite subtle meanings all at once. As one comes into being, all come into being; as one disintegrates, all disintegrate. Nothing is lacking, no principle is not complete. Even so, while as newborn child of Buddha the initiate enlightening being reveals the sun of wisdom of the Buddha-nature, still the clouds of habit have not yet been cleared away. Since your power in the Way is slight and your perception of reality is not perfectly clear, the universal mirror cognition is associated with the east and referred to as the gate of inspiration.

Menzan's Self-Enjoyment Samadhi (eighteenth century)

(translated by Shohaku Okumura, revised by Kokyo Henkel)

The Buddha's awareness, called "the wondrous mind of nirvana," is perfect and always quietly illuminating itself. Therefore, you must understand that "zen" is just a provisional name. Self-Enjoyment Samadhi is the "true Dharma eye storehouse, the wondrous mind of nirvana" (shobogenzo-nehanyoshin, of Wumenguan Case 6) and "unsurpassed complete perfect enlightenment" (anuttara-samyak-sambodhi). This is also called the "storehouse of great light" (daikomyozo, of Ejo). It is also referred to as "Limitless Meanings Samadhi" (muryogisho-zanmai, of the Lotus Sutra), "Precious Mirror Samadhi" (hokyo-zanmai, of Dongshan), "King of Samadhis" (zanmai-o-zanmai, of the Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra), and "The Storehouse of Vairochana symbolizing the Whole Universe Samadhi" (birushana-zo-zanmai, of the Flower Ornament Sutra). This is "essential function of the Buddhas and the functional essence of the Ancestors" (of Hongzhi). Understand this clearly and believe that this Self-Enjoyment Samadhi is "dropping off body and mind, body and mind dropped off" (shinjin daturaku, daturaku shinjin, of Rujing). All of these terms, taken from the various teachings of the Buddhas and Ancestors, are names for the zazen we practice... If you were to encounter such a true Dharma in the infinite eons of transmigration in the rounds of life-and-death, even one day of your life would be more precious than millions of years without the true Dharma. So devote yourself diligently to this samadhi, cherishing every second. Now I will explain in detail the way to clarify and rely on this samadhi. This is done simply by not clouding the light (komyo) of your Self. When the light of the Self is clear, you follow neither dullness nor distraction. The Third Ancestor said (in Xinxinming), "It is empty, clear, and self-illuminating, with no exertion of the mind's power." This is the vital point of the practice-enlightenment of this samadhi. "It is empty, clear, and self-illuminating" means the light of the Self shines brightly. "No exertion of the mind's power" means not to add the illusory mind's discrimination to the reality. When you make mental

struggle, the light becomes illusory mind, and brightness becomes darkness. If you do not make mental struggle, the darkness itself becomes the self-illumination of the light. This is similar to the light of a jewel illuminating the jewel itself. For example, it is like the light of the sun or the moon illuminating everything – mountains and rivers, human beings and dogs, etc., equally, without differentiation or evaluation. Also, a mirror reflects everything without bothering to discriminate. In this Self-Enjoyment Samadhi, just keep the light unclouded, without being concerned with the discrimination of objects. This is the meaning of Hongzhi's expression: "The essential function of the Buddhas and the functional essence of the Ancestors; knowing without touching things, illuminating without facing objects."

Shunryu Suzuki's Mind Waves (from "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind") (twentieth century)

Many sensations come, many thoughts or images arise, but they are just waves of your own mind. Nothing comes from outside your own mind. Usually we think of our mind as receiving impressions and experiences from outside, but that is not a true understanding of our mind. The true understanding is that the mind includes everything; when you think something comes from outside it means only that something appears in your mind. Nothing outside yourself can cause any trouble. You yourself make the waves in your mind. If you leave your mind as it is, it will become calm. This mind is called big mind. If your mind is related to something outside itself, that mind is a small mind, a limited mind. If your mind is not related to anything else, then there is no dualistic understanding in the activity of your mind. You understand activity as just waves of your mind. Big mind experiences everything within itself. Do you understand the difference between the two minds: the mind which includes everything, and the mind which is related to something? Actually they are the same thing, but the understanding is different, and your attitude towards your life will be different according to which understanding you have. That everything is included within your mind is the essence of mind... Whatever you experience is an expression of big mind.

Epilogue

The big mind in which we must have confidence is not something which you can experience objectively. It is something which is always with you, always on your side... The mind which is always on your side is not just your mind, it is universal mind, always the same, not different from another's mind. It is Zen mind. It is big, big mind. This mind is whatever you see... This mind is at the same time everything.

Shunryu Suzuki's Resuming Big Mind (from "Not Always So") (twentieth century)

When monkey mind is always taking over the activity of big mind, we naturally become a monkey. So monkey mind must have its boss, which is big mind. However, when we practice zazen, it is not that big mind is actually controlling small mind, but simply that when small mind becomes calm, big mind starts its true activity. Most of the time in our everyday life, we are involved in the activity of small mind. That is why we should practice zazen and be completely involved in resuming big mind... So in our practice, we rely on something great, and sit in that great space. The pain you have in your legs or some other difficulty is happening in that great space. As long as you do not lose the feeling that you are in the realm of Buddha nature, you can sit even though you have some difficulty. When you want to escape from your difficulty, or when you try to improve your practice, you create another problem for yourself. But if you just exist there, then you have a chance to appreciate your surroundings, and you can accept yourself completely, without changing anything. That is our practice. To exist in big mind is an act of faith, which is different from the usual faith of believing in a particular idea or being. It is to believe that something is supporting us and supporting all our activities including thinking mind and emotional feelings. All these things are supported by something big that has no form or color. It is impossible to know what it is, but something exists there, something that is neither material nor spiritual. Something like that always exists, and we exist in that space. That is the feeling of pure being.

Padmasambhava's Self-Liberation through Seeing with Naked Awareness

(discovered by Karma Lingpa in fourteenth century, translated by John Myrdhin Reynolds)

As for this sparkling awareness, which is called "mind," even though one says that it exists, it does not actually exist, (though) as a source, it is the origin of the diversity of all the bliss of Nirvana and all of the sorrow of Samsara... Some call it "the nature of the mind" or "mind itself." Some Tirthikas call it Atman or "the Self." The Shravakas call it Anatman or "the absence of a self." The Chittamatrins call it Chitta or "the Mind." Some call it Prajnaparamita or "the Perfection of Wisdom," Tathagata-garbha or "the embryo of Buddhahood," Mahamudra or "the Great Symbol," Dharmadhatu or "the dimension of Reality," Alaya or "the basis of everything." And some simply call it by the name "ordinary awareness."... When you look into yourself in this way nakedly (without any discursive thoughts), since there is only this pure observing, there will be found a lucid clarity without anyone being there who is the observer; only a naked manifest awareness is present. It is empty and immaculately pure, not being created by anything whatsoever. It is authentic and unadulterated, without any duality of clarity and emptiness. It is not permanent and yet it is not created by anything. However, it is not a mere nothingness or something annihilated because it is lucid and present. It does not exist as a single entity because it is present and clear in terms of being many, (though) it is not created as a multiplicity of things because it is inseparable and of a single flavor. This inherent self-awareness does not derive from anything outside itself.

Dakpo Tashi Namgyal's Clarifying the Natural State (sixteenth century)

(translated by Erik Pema Kunsang)

While in the state of lucid and thought-free calm-abiding, look directly into your conscious mind. It is a wakefulness for which no words suffice. It is not a definable entity, but at the same time, it is a self-knowing aware emptiness that is clear, lucid and awake. Sustain this without distraction... This is what is given many names, such as buddha-nature, nature of mind, nonarising dharmakaya, basic natural state, innate mind, original wakefulness, and mahamudra.

Karma Chagmey's Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen (seventeenth century)

(translated by Erik Pema Kunsang)

Mind has no form, color, or concrete substance. It is not to be found anywhere outside or in your body, nor in between. It is not found to be a concrete thing, even if you were to search throughout the ten directions. It does not arise from anywhere, nor does it abide or disappear at any place. Yet, it is not nonexistent, since your mind is vividly awake. It is not a singularity, because all these are of one essence. There is no one who can describe its nature. But, when expressing its resemblance, there is no end to what can be said. It may be given many kinds of names such as 'mind essence,' 'I,' or the 'all-ground.' It is the very basis of all of samsara and nirvana.

Jamgon Mipham's Lamp that Dispels Darkness (nineteenth century)

(translated by Erik Pema Kunsang)

When your mind experiences a vacant state, which lacks both thought and mental activity, look naturally into the one who notices this state, the one who is not thinking. When you do so, there is a thought-free knowing that is totally open, free from inside and outside, like a clear sky. This knowing is not a duality of that experienced and that experiencing, but you can resolve that it is your own nature and feel the conviction that "it is no other than this."