

# **The Marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan 【Zen】**



## **The Marrow of Mind Ground In Chinese Chan**

**The fresh green trees are as pure as an embroidery, the  
Blue lake surface is as crystal-clear as a mirror.**

**The sun shines in the vast sky and the white cloud floats, the  
Wind blows on the clear water and the ripples arise.**



**What Is the Marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan ?**

**How to Truly Attain the Marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan ?**

Chan practitioner with an eye on the forehead, who penetrates the bone through to the marrow of “Picking up the whole great earth in your fingers, and it’s as big as a grain of rice” and “All Buddhas in the ten directions and three times turn the great Dharma Wheel on the tip of a fine strand of hair”, please say something !

All practitioners still in the barrel of black pitch, who want to penetrate through this great matter, please directly let go of all complications of consciousness, so as to ultimately realize “There is absolutely no dust in the mirror of Caoxi”. Or please investigate diligently, in order that you will be able to directly see into your self-nature and have an insight into the Mind.



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## **【Guohan's Explication】**

### **The Marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan — Direct Realization & No Attainment —**

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More than fifteen-hundred years ago, Bodhidharma, the first Chan Patriarch, came to China from India. He transmitted the Mind Dharma of inconceivable Chan to the eastern land, and unfolded the long history of transmitting the Treasury of True Dharma Eye for the Chinese Chan sect. Hence, the mind-to-mind transmission had been handed down generation after generation from second Patriarch Huike all the way down to Caoxi Huineng, and had flourished and become prosperous. The Caoxi Mind Dharma transmitted by Chan Patriarch Dajian Huineng is the complete and sudden Dharma gate of direct pointing at the Mind, and furthermore establishes the foundation of "Dharma-gate of the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan's Mind Ground" in Chinese Chan sect. Therefore, the Caoxi Dharma lineage has been generally acknowledged as the origin of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan.

During the 250 years following Sixth Patriarch Huineng (638-713), every generation produced its sectarian Patriarchs/Matriarchs. Among them, there were two major Dharma lineages, including Chan Master Nanyue Huairang (677-744) as well as his successor Mazu Daoyi (709-788) and Chan Master Qingyuan Xingsi (660-740) together with his heir Shitou Xiqian (700-790), which had been handed on from age to age at the longest and their Chan styles had been greatly promoted. Their transmissions had been turned over and over, and had gradually formed Five Houses and Seven Schools with different Chan styles. Under Mazu Daoyi's lineage, were established the Linji school of Linji Yixuan (?-867), and the Guiyang school of Guishan Lingyou (771-853) and his heir Yangshan Huiji (807-883). Meanwhile, under Shitou Xiqian's lineage, were founded the Caodong school of Dongshan Liangjie (807-869) and his heir Caoshan Benji (840-901), the Yumen school of Yumen Wenyan (864-949), and the Fayen school of Fayen Wenyi (885-958). Until the Song dynasty, from the Linji school, the Yangqi school of Yangqi Fanghui (992-1049) and the Huanglong school of Huanglong Huinan (1002-1069) were established.

During this period, Chan practitioners often use "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" as a huatou for genuine investigation. Patriarchs/Matriarchs with an eye on the forehead even apply all kinds of wise strategies and dynamic devices, such as giving guidance, spurring for development, pushing and pressing, and turning

around etc., in order to dissolve the sticking points and remove the bonds, knock off their fetters and chains. Therefore, it formally reaches the golden age of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan's great function. Moreover, the true spirit of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan, which is often referred to as "no depending on words and languages, a special transmission outside all Dharma of Teachings, direct pointing at the Mind, and seeing into one's self-nature and thus attaining Buddhahood", is extant in this age.

Recently, a seasoned Chan practitioner occasionally comes and asks, "What is the marrow of the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan?" Or even speaks of, "Since Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan is of no cultivation and no attainment, then how to genuinely attain the marrow of the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan?" At that very moment, Guohan replies with "It only needs direct realization, and it is of ultimate no-attainment." Meanwhile, Guohan also reminds Chan practitioner of "Once falling into explanations and deluded thinking is not Chan itself, make sure that you do not mistake a finger for the moon."

However, the present time cannot be compared with the past. Guohan has no choice but to point a finger strenuously at the moon for sharing with Chan practitioners, and looks forward to doing his best for helping them walk the Chan path of returning directly home to their true nature. All Chan practitioners! Suppose you directly turn yourself around, at the very moment it is the native home of self-nature. It is also feasible to directly turn around and walk on the path of returning home to the self-nature, or even to straightly walk the impasse of investigating Chan. Just investigate with mind of straightforwardness, and that exactly is it!

## 【FIRST INQUIRY】

### What Is the Marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan ?

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The Sixth Patriarch Huineng of Caoxi, who is the founder of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, ultimately realized that all things are not apart from the self-nature, upon having heard the sentence “The mind arises without abiding in anything” in the *Diamond Sutra* expounded by the Fifth Patriarch Hungren in Huangmei. Then, he said to his Venerable Master, “Who would have expected that the self-nature is intrinsically pure ! Who would have expected that the self-nature is intrinsically non-arising and non-perishing ! Who would have expected that the self-nature is intrinsically self-sufficient ! Who would have expected that the self-nature is intrinsically immovable ! Who would have expected that the self-nature can manifest all things ! ” And forthwith he received Fifth Patriarch’s transmission of the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.

Chan Master Xuyun (Empty Cloud), who renewed the Chan sect of modern ages, has delivered a discourse on these five sentences of Huineng, “The first four sentences beginning with ‘who would have expected’ are taking in functions and returning to its nondualistic essence, while the last one is manifesting great functions from the whole essence. And while the first four of ‘who would have expected’ are for self-deliverance, the last one is to deliver all sentient beings. That which is able to manifest all things is the Wisdom of All Aspects.” This has already obviously pointed out that, the Bodhi self-nature of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan and the great functions of Wisdom of All Aspects are not one and not different from each other, and also are of non-duality and interbeing.

Latter, Sixth Patriarch Huineng began to beat the Dharma drum. It is mentioned in his discourse on the chapter of Samadhi and Wisdom in *Platform Sutra* : “My ‘Dharma of Supreme Awakening of Great Wisdom’ is based on simultaneous samadhi and wisdom. But do not be confused that samadhi and wisdom are different from each other, for they are of one essence and originally of non-duality. Samadhi is the quintessence of wisdom, while wisdom is the function of samadhi. When merging into wisdom, samadhi is in wisdom. And when merging into samadhi, wisdom is in samadhi. If you realize this principle, that is the equivalent and simultaneous manifestation of samadhi and wisdom. .... The Samadhi of One Act means always acting with a straightforward mind in all places, no matter whether we are walking, standing, sitting, or reclining. The *Pure Name Sutra* says, ‘The mind of straightforwardness is the Site of the Way (Dao), the Pure Land.’ ... Just act with a straightforward mind and have no attachments to all things.”

Hence we know, Patriarch/Matriarch Chan is the ultimate and complete Dharma- gate of the mind ground, which is of intrinsic completion and accomplishment without gradual

steps, is of intrinsic sufficiency without cultivation and actualization, and is with direct application of the true mind and direct realization of the supreme Buddhahood. The marrow of the mind ground of this Suddenness Chan lies in always acting with a mind of straightforwardness in our daily life in all places, no matter whether we are walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, and having not attached ourselves to all things and all states of mind (any achievement in Chan investigation). Thus in every moment and according to the causes and conditions, the ultimately empty self-nature of Bodhi is able to spontaneously arise innumerable ultimate subtle existences, and manifest boundless subtle functions and subtle actions of Wisdom of All Aspects. Therefore, in all their daily matters, Chan practitioners are able to be always in the “One-Act Samadhi”, and permanently in conformity with “Dharma Realm of One Reality” – that is in the multiple and endless Dharma-realm, taking one dharma at will is of interbeing and interpenetration with all dharmas, and there is non-interference among all phenomena.

Before entering into nirvana in the year 713, the Sixth Patriarch Huineng entrusted his disciples with a verse of “Accomplishing Wisdom of All Aspects”:

“The mind ground contains the inherent seeds of Buddha-wisdom,  
All will spontaneously manifest upon receiving the all-pervading rain of Dharma.  
When the Chan practitioner suddenly awakens to the great blossoming mind,  
The fruit of supreme and complete enlightenment will naturally mature.”

*(The Platform Sutra; Chapter on Dharma Transmission & Final Instructions)*

This verse clearly points out that for all sentient beings on the great earth, their mind ground actually embraces all seeds of intrinsically complete and accomplishing wisdom and virtues of Buddha. Therefore, those living beings, with the maturity of their karmic potentiality, are able to accept the Dharma-gate of the mind ground of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan, and always act with straightforward mind in their daily matters and in all places of walking, standing, sitting, or reclining, just like grasses and bushes will naturally sprout upon the coming of the all-pervading rain. At the very moment that causes and conditions ripen, they surely are able to suddenly and ultimately see into their original nature, and have an insight into their true mind. Meanwhile, the great “blossoming” (i.e. emancipated) mind can manifest all dharmas, and all things are entirely the profound functions of the Dharma Body. Thereafter, they simultaneously act with “non-arising manifestation” and “effortless spontaneousness” for universally delivering all sentient beings according to the conditions, and the Bodhi fruit of supreme and complete enlightenment will naturally and definitely become mature.

Chan Master Jiangxi Daji Daoyi, the Dharma heir of Nanyue Huairang, had given a discourse to the public :

“The Way (Dao) does not need cultivation, but only not to defile it. What is defilement? While there is mind of arising and perishing, and mind of effort and intension, all is defilement. Suppose the Chan practitioner wants to directly realize the Way, the ordinary mind is the Way. The so-called ordinary mind is of no effort, no right or wrong, no grasping or rejecting, no nihilism or permanence, no sentient beings and no saints. ... Always being with the ordinary mind, then at present no matter whether walking, standing, sitting, reclining, or responding to potentiality and associating with all beings,

all is the Way. The Way is precisely Dharma-realm, and innumerable subtle functions are just from the Dharma-realm. ... All dharmas are dharmas of the Mind, all names are names of the Mind, and all things are manifested from the Mind, thus, the Mind is the foundation of all dharmas.”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 28)*

The Mind is Chan, and also is the Way (Dao) or Dharma-realm. No problem concerning true or illusory states exist in Chan, Way or Dharma-realm. What is true mind ? What is illusory mind ? From the prospective of Chan, Way or Dharma-realm, true mind is illusory mind and vice versa, true mind and illusory mind are of non-duality, and vexation is wisdom. Furthermore, Chan, Way or Dharma-realm is of intrinsic completion and accomplishment, of original self-sufficiency, and without cultivation of the Way and sitting Chan. Chan practitioners merely have to live their ordinary life with the ordinary mind, then they are able to realize that this mind is ultimate non-arising and effortlessness, and that is to directly actualize Chan, Way or Dharma-realm.

In fact, the ordinary mind is exactly the straightforward mind, but the former is more apt than the latter. And the mind of “pure awareness of self-nature” (no self-referential awareness) is exactly the ordinary mind, but the former is more practical than the latter. That is to say, if we can only maintain the ordinary mind of ultimate pure awareness in every moment, then all experiences of ordinary life is Chan, Way or the Dharma Realm of the One Reality. This mind of straightforwardness, or the ordinary mind, or the mind of pure awareness is actually the mind activity of pure awareness of self-nature with no grasping and no rejecting, no discrimination and no attachment in the daily matters. Therefore, the ancient Chan practitioner would have said that, “It is easy to investigate Chan at a crossroads.” And it is no wonder that Layman Pang (?-808) would have accepted carrying water and moving firewood in the daily life exactly as the spiritual powers and their subtle functions.

In his discourse record, Chan Master Mazu Daoyi mentioned :  
“All sentient beings have not been apart from the samadhi of Dharma nature since innumerable kalpas. They are always in the samadhi of Dharma nature for wearing clothes, taking a meal, talking, and dealing with the situation. Their applications of six sense faculties and all actions are entirely the samadhi of Dharma nature.”

If Chan practitioners of better-than-average potentiality investigate Chan, upon the maturity of causes and conditions, they meet with the advice and guidance of ultimately enlightened Master, and suddenly realize the original nature and actualize the samadhi of Dharma nature without gradual steps. At this moment, the enlightened mind can reflect myriads of dharmas and phenomena just as subtle as a bright mirror, and is not departing from its pure and immovable self-nature. In the Tang dynasty, the Guiyang school’s Chan Master Yangshan Huiji asked his Master, Guishan Lingyou, “If millions of myriad phenomena were to arise simultaneously, what would you do ?” The Master replied, “Green is not yellow, long is not short. Every dharma abides in its own position. It has nothing to do with me.” *(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Guishan Lingyou)*

Therefore, from the wisdom-eye of the ultimately enlightened Chan practitioner to see the worldly forms, all myriads of dharmas and phenomena have their own positions,

conditions and perspectives, and within the unified harmony, there are not missing all individually different phenomena. Consequently, even if thousands of myriad phenomena are to appear simultaneously before the practitioner, he or she will also not be confused and disturbed by them, and is able to render all responses in just the right way. Meanwhile, relatively speaking, all myriads of dharmas and phenomena are also intrinsically the pure and undefiled Dharma Body of all Buddhas. In all things throughout the universe such as the so-called verdant luxuriant bamboos and dainty plum blossoms, there is not a single thing, not a single place that is not the Buddha emitting light and discoursing the Dharma.

The colt which tramples people all over the world to death (Chan Master Daoyi), even mentioned in his discourse record as follows :

“When arising, it is only the dharma that arises; when perishing, it is only the dharma that perishes. At the time of the dharma arising, it is not to say ‘I’ (the self) arise; at the time of the dharma perishing, it is not to say ‘I’ (the self) perish. For the previous thought, the following thought and the intermediate thought, they are of no mutual dependence thought after thought, and all thoughts are in perfect resting and cessation. This is called the Ocean-Seal Samadhi, and it harmoniously contains all dharmas. It is like hundreds of thousands of different rivers flowing into the ocean simultaneously, and all are labeled as seawater. Abiding in one flavor is to encompass all flavors, while abiding in the ocean is mingling with all rivers. It is just as ‘bathing in the ocean is using all waters’.”

Chan practitioners of ultimate and complete enlightenment, not only have realized the samadhi of Dharma nature, but also have further actualized the Ocean-Seal Samadhi. That is to say they have indeed ultimately awakened to the so-called “One thought for ten thousand years ” and “A single thought sufficiently contains the Ten Dharma Realms ” of Chan sect, or “A single thought completely contains the Three Thousand Worlds” of Tiantai sect, or “All Buddhas in the ten directions and three times turn the great Dharma Wheel on the tip of a fine strand of hair” of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. Thus, they have already genuinely and completely enlightened to “A single thought is the reality of the essence of the Ten Dharma Realms, the Three Thousand Worlds, and All Buddhas in the Ten Directions and Three Times; Yet the Ten Dharma Realms, the Three Thousand Worlds, and All Buddhas in the Ten Directions and Three Times are the manifestation of great function of one-thought reality.”

Let’s take a look at the Chan dialogue between Monk Longshan (Dharma heir of Mazu Daoyi) and Dongshan Liangjie (founder of Caodong school) :

“One day in his travel, Dongshan Liangjie went astray to Tarnzhou Longshan, and asked Monk Longshan, ‘What had you realized before you resided in this mountain ? ’

Longshan answered, ‘I had seen that two muddy buffalos were fighting and entering into the sea, and there had been no messages until now.’ Dongshan then prostrated with proper demeanor. Dongshan again asked, ‘What is the Guest among the Host ? ’

Longshan again said, ‘The blue sky is covered with white clouds.’ Dongshan again

asked, ‘What is the Host among the Guest ? ’ Longshan again said, ‘Having not stepped out for long.’ Dongshan further asked, ‘What is the difference between the Guest and the Host ? ’ Longshan further said, ‘The water ripple in the Yangtze River.’ Dongshan

further asked, ‘What is there to say when the Guest and the Host meet together ? ’  
Longshan further said, ‘The light breeze gently brushes the white moon.’ ”  
*(The Compendium of Five Lamps; Volume 3)*

The Chan practitioner with an eye on the forehead, who surely has genuinely realized both “The light breeze gently brushes the white moon” (non-interference among phenomena) and “Picking up the whole great earth in your fingers, and it’s as big as a grain of rice” (one-thought reality of Dharma Realm), is able to universally deliver all sentient beings according to the conditions with the great ineffable power of non-arising manifestation and effortless spontaneousness on the continuous journey of Chan (Zen) or the Way (Dao).

Chan Master Nanquan Puyuan (748-834), the Dharma heir of Mazu Daoyi, had also discoursed about “The ordinary mind is the Way (Dao)”, please see the following gongan :  
“Zhaozhou [Congshen] asked Nanquan [Puyuan], ‘What is the Way ? ’ Nanquan answered, ‘The ordinary mind is the Way.’ Zhaozhou asked, ‘Can it be sought after ? ’ Nanquan replied, ‘The more you seek, the far does it slip away.’ Zhaozhou asked again, ‘How can I know it is the Way without seeking ? ’ Nanquan replied again, ‘The Way does not belong to knowing or not knowing. Knowing is delusion, while not knowing is confusion. Suppose you genuinely realize the Way of no thought, you are completely free like the vastness of space with ultimate emptiness. Hence, how can you inadequately discriminate it as right or wrong ? ’ Upon hearing this, Zhaozhou had sudden enlightenment.”  
*(The Gateless Gate of Chan Sect; Case 19)*

Nanquan Puyuan clearly pointed out that, the very moment of the ordinary mind is just the genuine Way. This true Way is of no action, no seeking, and further of no knowing and no no-knowing. Nevertheless, this ordinary mind is just no mind, and that is the mind in the least without the self-centered discrimination and attachment, but is solely the mind of great wisdom and great compassion. It is just then able to realize the Chan realm just-suited to that mentioned in the verse of Wumen Huikai’s commentary on above case :  
“Hundreds of flowers in spring and the moon in autumn,  
the cool breeze in summer and the snow in winter.  
If idle and miscellaneous concerns do not cloud the mind,  
this exactly is the worldly happiest season.”

In his style of receiving the potentiality, Chan Master Zhaozhou Congshen (778-897, Dharma heir of Nanquan Puyuan) had a famous gongan of “Zhaozhou’s Tea” :  
“Master Zhaozhou asked the first one of two new arrivals, ‘Have you been here before ? ’ The monk said, ‘no, I haven’t.’ Zhaozhou said, ‘Go have some tea.’ Zhaozhou then asked the other monk, ‘Have you been here before ? ’ The monk said, ‘Yes, I have.’ Zhaozhou said, ‘Go have some tea.’ The head monk asked, ‘Setting aside the fact that you told the one who had never been here before to go have some tea, why did you tell the one who had been here before to go have some tea ? ’ Zhaozhou said, ‘Head monk ! ’ The head monk said, ‘Yes ? ’ Zhaozhou said, ‘Go have some tea.’”  
*(The Discourse Records of Monk Zhaozhou; Volume 3)*



What is the Zhaozhou's tea? It represents Chan, the Way, the pure mind of self-nature, the "Mind" and the "Nature" of having an insight into the true mind and seeing into the self-nature. Therefore, "Go have some tea" is to have Chan practitioners respond to the potentiality and associate with all beings according to the conditions with the mind of Chan, the Way, and pure wisdom in their daily lives, and that also is to have them live the ordinary life with the ordinary mind of ultimate pure awareness. If Chan practitioner of superior potentiality is able to always maintain the ordinary mind of ultimate pure-awareness, then every moment is Chan, the Way, or Dharma Realm of One Reality. As for Chan practitioners of better-than-average potentiality, if they can move solidly every step and truly investigate with the ordinary mind of ultimate pure-awareness, then they are able to straightly turn around and walk the path of returning directly home to their true nature. With regard to Chan practitioners of general potentiality, so long as they can investigate Chan diligently with the ordinary mind of pure awareness of self-nature, they are able to straightly walk the impasse of investigating Chan, or at first make a living journey and after all walk the Chan path of "the native home is within sight".

Chan Master Zhaozhou even had given a discourse about the marrow of mind ground of the Suddenness Chan :

"Zhaozhou went to Chan hall and expounded to the public, 'Just like a bright pearl at hand, it manifests their true features when westerners come, and also the same for easterners. I use a blade of grass as a sixty-foot golden statue, and use a sixty-foot golden statue as a blade of grass. Buddha is vexation, and vexation is Buddha.' At this moment, one monk asked, 'Not realizing whose vexation is Buddha?' Zhaozhou replied, 'All sentient beings' vexation.' The monk asked, 'How to avoid it?' Zhaozhou said, 'Why need to avoid it?'"

*(The Compendium of Five Lamps; Volume 4)*

After actualizing into "using a blade of grass as a sixty-foot golden statue" (one is interbeing with all) and "using a sixty-foot golden statue as a blade of grass" (all is interbeing with one), the Chan practitioners of ultimate and complete enlightenment completely have no aware of their own wisdom and power, yet indeed the unlimited mighty mind-power of their great wisdom (Wisdom of All Aspects or Buddha's Wisdom) and great compassion (non-referential compassion or pure compassion) constantly manifests, and further naturally and functionlessly responds to all causes and conditions. Meanwhile, owing to his or her ultimate realization of "vexation is wisdom", at every present moment of delivering the world in compliance with causes and conditions, he or she is able to make use of sentient beings' vexations as a skilful tool of wisdom to help them for fulfilling all these expedient actions of "uplifting all beings' quality by ripening their manifestation of Buddha-wisdom, and establishing the pure land on the planet Earth".

Chan Master Hunan Shitou Xiqian, the Dharma heir of Qingyuan Xingsi, had also given a discourse to the public in the Chan hall :

"My Dharma gate was originally transmitted by the Buddha. It is not a matter of 'meditative concentration' (samadhi) and 'pure diligence' (refer to emancipation), but

just a matter of realizing and penetrating the Buddha's wisdom — mind itself is Buddha. In fact, 'mind, Buddha and sentient beings' or 'bodhi (wisdom) and vexation' have different names respectively, but actually they are with the same essence. All of you should realize your own mind that its essence is apart from nihilism and permanence, and its nature is beyond impurity and purity. This mind is thoroughly pure and wholly perfect, and all the same for both ordinary people and saints. When it is used to the full capacity, its function is infinite and departing from mind, thought and consciousness. The three realms and six ways manifest from this mind. It is like a moon on the water and an image in the mirror, where can there be arising and perishing? If you are able to realize it, then there are all intrinsically sufficient."

*(The Record of the Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 14)*

The elucidation of Chan Master Shitou has already clearly pointed out : Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan is the Dharma-gate of the mind ground in which "it is merely a matter of seeing into the self-nature, not a matter of samadhi and emancipation." It emphasizes that "vexation is bodhi (wisdom)" and "mind, Buddha and sentient beings are of no difference". Chan practitioners only have to directly apply the ordinary mind of pure awareness of self-nature, in order to directly realize the Buddha's wisdom and directly accomplish Wisdom of All Aspects at the very moment.

Let's refer to the following gongan :

"One monk asked Shitou, 'What is emancipation ?' Shitou said, 'Who binds you ?' The monk asked again, 'What is pure land ?' Shitou said again, 'Who defiles you ?' The monk asked again, 'What is nirvana ?' Shitou said again, 'Who gives you cycle of birth and death ?' "

Hence we know, Chan Master Shitou used this strategy of Chan's great function to guide and press Chan practitioner for direct realization at the right moment and seeing into the self-nature and attaining Buddhahood.

Let's refer to another case :

"[Tianhuang] Daowu asked Shitou, 'Who has attained the essential principle of Caoxi ?' Shitou replied, 'Someone who realizes the Buddhadharma can attain it.' Daowu asked, 'Have you attained it ?' Shitou answered, 'I have no attainment.' Daowu asked again, 'Why do you have no attainment ?' Shitou said, 'I have no realization of the Buddhadharma.'"

Hence it is further evident, Chan Master Shitou furthermore guided the Chan practitioner with "ultimate no-attainment is genuinely attaining ultimate and complete enlightenment, and ultimate no-accomplishment is just then truly accomplishing Wisdom of All Aspects."

Chan Master Shitou Xiqian had mentioned in his *Inquiry into Matching Halves* : "Every dharma includes all realms, mutually interact or not. Interaction brings more mutual involvement, however every dharma has its own position." By means of this verse, Chan Master Shitou had given a clear description of the Chan world (realm) of ultimate and complete enlightenment. The Chan practitioners of ultimate enlightenment realize that every dharma includes all dharmas, all realms and all of totality. They have truly actualized that all dharmas have interaction, that is, the

“interdependence” (interbeing & interpenetration) of all dharmas : “In the multiple developing and endlessly expanding Dharma-realm of ten directions, one dharma is all dharmas and all dharmas are one dharma, one dharma penetrates into all dharmas and all dharmas penetrate into one dharma. It is just like the Indra network with multiple interfusion and mutual manifestation, therefore, all innumerable dharmas altogether are free and liberated, and function freely without obstruction.” Yet at the same time they have also actualized all dharmas have non-interaction, that is, the “independence” (discrepancy) of all dharmas : “It is said in the *Lotus Sutra*, ‘all dharmas abide in their own positions, and the ultimate reality of all worldly phenomena always abides directly in true suchness.’ Among all universal and worldly dharmas, every dharma has its own position, condition and perspective, and all dharmas are entirely and truthfully manifesting with their original face and are spontaneously functioning.”

A gongan of Chan Master Yaoshan Weiyan (751-834), the Dharma heir of Shitou Xiqian, is listed below for reference :

“One day, Yaoshan sat on a rock. Shitou asked, ‘What are you doing here ?’ Yaoshan said, ‘All is of no effort.’ Shitou asked, ‘In this way, is this idle sitting ?’ Yaoshan replied, ‘Idle sitting is of effort.’ Shitou asked again, ‘You talk about effortlessness. Then, what is effortlessness for ?’ Yaoshan answered, ‘Thousands of saints even have no acquaintance with it.’ Shitou then praised him with a verse :

‘Ever living with it without knowing the name,  
The Patriarch of effortless spontaneousness merely acts in this way.  
Since the ancient times all sages have not been acquainted yet,  
How are the ordinary people of effort able to realize it ? ’ ’

*(The Compendium of Five Lamps; Volume 5)*

Shitou Xiqian praised at Yaoshan Weiyan’s realization by this verse, in which the ultimate realization of “effortlessness & spontaneousness” is discussed. Chan Master Mazu Daoyi had expounded, “No ending in effort, and no abiding in effortlessness. Effort is the function of native home of effortlessness, and effortlessness is the base of the home of effort.” In fact, a Chan practitioner of ultimate enlightenment is a leisured practitioner of the Way, skillful in effortless effort and spontaneous liberation. They are not only able to manifest great functions of “being purely aware of and appropriately responding to the potentialities of the practitioners” and “killing and bringing to life are free from impediment,” at every moment on the occasion of delivering all sentient beings in accordance with causes and conditions; but they are also able to truly realize that all great functions and great actions are of ultimate emptiness with non-arising and effortlessness. Thus, they will be able to further continue with upward transcendence and gallop on the great Way of Chan, so as to dissolve the habits of ignorance with “non-arising manifestation” and “effortless spontaneousness”, and to universally deliver all seemingly illusory sentient beings.

Now once again let’s take a look at another case related to Chan Master Yaoshan : “Layman Li asked Yaoshan, ‘What is the Way (Dao) ?’ Yaoshan pointed upward and downward by hand and said, ‘Do you realize it ?’ Layman Li said, ‘I don’t realize it.’

Yaoshan said, 'The clouds in the sky, and the water in the bottle.' Layman Li was pleased with prostration and narrated a verse :

'The form of body is trained as that of a crane,  
Chan Master is reading sutras underneath many pine trees;  
Come ask the Way and receive no discourse,  
The clouds are in the blue sky and the water is in the bottle.' "

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 14)*

Chan or the Way has one flavor and is ineffable. The realization of One-flavor Chan is that "none but the taster knows the flavor of the water." There is no way to disclose any relevant message of Chan. However, by means of the verse "The clouds are in the blue sky and the water is in the bottle", which is the response of Chan Master Yaoshan Weiyuan to layman Li, we are more or less able to realize the mind state after reaching the ultimate and complete enlightenment of Chan or the Way. In other words, that is when Chan practitioners ultimately realize both "all dharmas abide in their own positions" and "non-interference among all phenomena", the liberal state of pure mind of "compassion and wisdom are simultaneously applied" and "boundless subtle function" is then spontaneously manifested in their daily activities.

Chan Master Danxia Tianran (739-824), another Dharma heir of Shitou Xiqian, addressed the public at Mt. Danxia in Nanyang :

"Chan Master Danxia entered the hall and said, 'All of you here have to take good care of your own spiritual treasury, which is not attainable through labeling and describing by the effortful-effort of your deluded mind, and there is even no need to talk about attainment and non-attainment. Formerly when I met with Master Shitou, he merely taught me to look after this treasury personally, as it is unattainable by way of words and languages. Each of you here has a true Buddha sitting within your mind ground. This is precisely beyond all doubts. Is Chan something you understand ? Is a Buddha something you can attain ? The word of Buddha can never be realized through hearing forever.

All of you, listen and see ! Those things, such as skillful means and expedience, the unlimited mind of kindness, compassion, joy and letting go, cannot be attained outward and do not abide in your mind ground. Skillful means is Manjushri Bodhisattva, while expedience is Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. Do you still want to seek after something else ? You neither need to rely on the sutras and teachings, nor to fall into nothingness. These days Chan practitioners are all in a tizzy, investigating Chan and inquiring into the Way. Here in my place, there is no Way to be cultivated and no Dharma to be realized. Merely drink when you're thirsty and eat when you're hungry by way of clear awareness without self-referential deluded thinking. Just always act with this Mind in all places in your daily life to realize that Shakyamuni is the ordinary person. All of you must have an insight into the true mind and see into the self-nature for yourselves. Do not act as a blind donkey to mislead all other blind donkeys, and all together march right into the pit of ignorance. It bears analogy to playing a competitive game in the darkness at night, how could you win ? Wish there is nothing abiding in your mind and take good care of yourself ! ' "

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 14)*

The spiritual treasury, which is directly pointed by Chan Master Danxia, is the marrow of the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan. What is it after all with regard to this spiritual treasury ? It is but the Dharma Realm of the One Reality, which is of original completion and accomplishment and of intrinsic self-sufficiency, perfectly harmonious without any hindrance in a speck of dust as in a universe. Here is a true Buddha sitting within your mind ground, being of non-emptiness and non-existence, non-arising and non-perishing, no names and no forms, and neither inside and nor outside. All those things, such as skillful means, expedience, and the mind of kindness, compassion, joy and letting go, do not come from outside and abide in your mind ground, yet all subtle existences and profound functions manifest in accordance with causes and conditions. This Suddenness Chan, which does not need to realize its essence by means of the teaching and to actualize the Way relying on Chan investigation, has no Way to be cultivated and no Chan to be realized. The Sixth Patriarch Huineng expounded that “Ordinary people are themselves Buddhas”, “Vexation is itself Bodhi (enlightenment)”, and “Being free from attachment to the realm of sense objects thought after thought is Bodhi, and also exactly is Buddha.” Therefore, Chan practitioners merely have to realize “vexation is wisdom” with the pure mind of self-nature in all daily activities, and this is exactly to take good care of their own intrinsically sufficient spiritual treasury.

Now, let us take a look at one special gongan related to “Danxia’s burning Buddha” in the history of Chan sect :

“During the Yuan He era of the Tang dynasty (around the year 810), Chan Master Danxia visited Fragrant Mountain in Luoyang. There he became a friend of the monk Funiu. Later, Danxia stayed at Huilin Monastery. During some extremely cold weather, he took a wooden statue of Buddha to make a fire for keeping warm. The temple abbot exclaimed against Danxia in outrage, ‘Why are you burning my wooden buddha ?’ Danxia poked about in the embers with a stick and said, ‘I’m burning this buddha to get the sacred relics from it.’ The temple abbot said, ‘How can a wooden buddha have sacred relics ?’ Danxia said, ‘Well, if it has no sacred relics, let’s burn a couple more of them.’ At the very moment, the temple abbot got enlightened.”

*(The Compendium of Five Lamps; Volume 5)*

Chan Master Zhaozhou had expounded to the public, “A gold Buddha does not pass through a furnace. A wooden Buddha does not get through fire. A mud Buddha does not go through water. The genuine Buddha does sit within your mind ground.” However, he had not yet burned any Buddha statue. Nevertheless, for the purpose of receiving practitioners with open hands, Chan Master Danxia burned a wooden statue of Buddha in the coldest weather. When receiving severe scolding from the temple abbot, he answered that it is for the sake of getting the sacred relics. Then, after the abbot’s refutation about that the wooden Buddha has no relics, he further pushed the abbot with “Since there is no relics, let’s burn a couple more.” Upon hearing the sentence, the temple abbot suddenly saw into the original face. The ancient Chan Masters with an eye on the forehead, are adept at applying all kinds of dynamic device and wise strategy for guiding Chan practitioners to immediately let go of all illusory attachments and suddenly realize the self-nature. Therefore, it is evident that “Danxia’s burning Buddha” is indeed the skillful

means of “being purely aware of and appropriately responding to the potentialities of the practitioners.”

The Chan investigation gongans of Chan Master Baizhang Huaihai (720-814), another Dharma heir of Mazu Daoyi, is cited for reference :

“One day Baizhang Huaihai accompanied Mazu Daoyi on a walk to the suburbs. A flock of wild ducks flew past them. Mazu asked, ‘What’s that ?’ Baizhang said, ‘Wild ducks.’ Mazu asked again, ‘Where would they go ?’ Baizhang said again, ‘They flew away.’ Mazu then turned around and twisted Baizhang’s nose so hard that he cried out. Mazu said, ‘So you say they have flown away !’ Upon hearing this, Baizhang attained great enlightenment.

On another occasion Baizhang was in attendance to Master Ma. Mazu took a look at the whisk sitting on the corner of the Chan bed. Baizhang said, ‘When merging into the function, simultaneously depart from this function.’ Mazu said, ‘In the future if you begin to do the teaching, how will you help people ?’ Baizhang picked up the whisk and held it upright. Mazu said, ‘When merging into the function, simultaneously depart from this function.’ Baizhang placed the whisk back on its stand. Mazu suddenly let out an earth-shaking shout so loud that Baizhang was deaf for three days.”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Baizhang Huaihai; Volume 2)*

Mazu Daoyi first applied the great function of “The bird flies in the sky, there is no trace in the bird’s track” to receive Baizhang Huaihai, and let him have an insight into his true mind, see into his self-nature, and greatly realize “the ordinary mind is the Way”. Afterwards, Mazu again used the testing strategy of “When merging into the function, simultaneously depart from this function” to confirm the deeper realization of Baizhang. As a matter of fact, if in discoursing the Mind Dharma of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, all is intrinsically ready-made. General Chan practitioners ought to straightly apply the ordinary mind of pure awareness of self-nature, and move down-to-earth every step on the way, so as to realize “no obstruction in the interbeing of phenomena and noumena”. Then, they once again transcend upward one way to become host of the host with the mind of pure wisdom of spontaneousness & effortlessness, and ultimately and completely actualize “the patient rest in non-arising” to live their daily lives with “wearing clothes, taking a meal, and sleeping while tired”. Until now, they are able to manifest the wisdom of differences (sequential wisdom) and unfold their hands for affording skillful explications, in order to receive Chan practitioners to directly penetrate into the gate of non-arising.

In his discourse records, Chan Master Baizhang Huaihai had expounded to the public as follows :

“Q : What are the Mahayana essentials of sudden enlightenment in entering the Way ?

A : You first let go of all conditions, put all things at rest, and altogether put down all dharmas no matter good or bad, mundane or supramundane. Then, be sure to have no committing to memory, no deluded thinking to a particular thought, no clinging to the conditions and no attachment to any thought, and let go of the body and the mind so that they are all at ease. When the deluded mind takes a full rest like wood

and rock, the mouth has no discoursing and the mind is of effortlessness. Thus far, suppose the mind ground is empty, the wisdom is spontaneously manifested just as the sun appears when the clouds part. Chan practitioners merely rest all clinging to the conditions, let the consciousness of greed, hatred, craving, grasping, impurity and purity come to an end; then, being immovable to five desires and eight winds, not hindered by seeing, hearing, perception and cognition, not confused by all realms, they naturally possess all merits and virtues, and possess all spiritual powers and their subtle functions, thus they are the practitioner of emancipation. Since their mind has no discrimination and no disturbance, no regulation and no scattering to all realms and dharmas, they penetrate into all sounds and forms without obstructions and are called the practitioners of the Way. Without applying discrimination of good or evil and right or wrong, they do not crave for any one dharma, also not reject any one dharma, and are called Mahayana practitioners. They are not bound by all good or evil, emptiness or existence, impurity or purity, effort or effortlessness, mundane or supramundane, and blessedness or wisdom, so this wisdom is named as Buddha's wisdom. Furthermore, the consciousness of knowing and comprehension, such as right or wrong, beautiful or ugly, noumena or no noumena, all comes to an end and cannot tie them up; therefore, they are at liberty on all occasions, are called Bodhisattva with beginner's mind, and then attain Buddhahood. ”

*(The Discourse Record of Chan Master Baizhang Huaihai; Volume 3)*

Chan Master Baizhang instructed that all Chan practitioners to let go of all forms, put all things at rest, and think all dharmas neither of good nor bad, mundane nor supramundane. Then, at the very moment, the self-nature of true suchness manifests thoughts, their six sense faculties have the functions of seeing, hearing and pure awareness, and they are adept at differentiating all forms of dharmas while remaining non-abiding in all dharmas and all realms. Therefore, if Chan practitioners are able to always manifest genuine awareness of prajna wisdom of ultimate emptiness (pure awareness of self-nature), in a moment all their deluded thoughts take a full rest, and they suddenly realize the “no thought” principle of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan. That is to suddenly see into self-nature and have insight into the true mind. Those with one realization of no thought immediately penetrate into all dharmas, immediately see into the realms of all Buddhas, and immediately ascend to the rank of Buddhahood.

The related gongan of Chan Master Guizong Zhichang, who has attained the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye of Mazu Daoyi, is also cited for reference :

“A monk asked Guizong, ‘What is the profound principle ?’ Guizong replied, ‘Nobody can realize.’ The monk asked, ‘How about those who seek for it ?’ Guizong replied, ‘The more you seek for it, the farther it slips away.’ The monk asked again, ‘How about those who do not seek for it ?’ Guizong said, ‘Who is seeking after the profound Principle ?’ Then he said again, ‘When you go for it, there is no place for your application of mind.’ The monk asked again, ‘How come there is no expedient gate to allow practitioners to penetrate into it ?’ Guizong said again, ‘Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva's power of subtle wisdom is able to release all worldly beings from suffering.’ The monk once again asked, ‘What is Avalokiteshvara's power of subtle wisdom ?’

Guizong tapped the caldron's lid three times and said, 'Have you heard it ? ' The monk answered, 'I've heard it.' Guizong once again said, 'Why do I have no hearing ? ' The monk was silent. Guizong ousted the monk with a stick."

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 7)*

For the purpose of guiding Chan practitioners, Chan Master Guizong Zhichang directly pointed out that the profound principle (the marrow of the mind ground) of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan lies in "ultimate no realization and no attainment" and "ultimate no mind and no effort". The Chan practitioners, who are with the ultimate pure mind of self-nature of no discrimination and no attachment (the ordinary mind of ultimate pure awareness), merely have to neither get rid of deluded thoughts nor seek for the true reality, and have to be of no seeking, no attainment and no effort in ordinary daily matters. Meanwhile, they are profoundly aware of all things in every moment with pure mind, which is free from all the defilements of attachment. Its manifested functions merge into pervading everywhere, and simultaneously depart from pervading everywhere. What they have to do is to manifest the pure mind so that the six consciousnesses, after passing through the six sense faculties, neither are defiled by nor attach to the six sense objects. When their pure mind is simultaneously coming to merge into and going to depart from the realms of six sense objects at liberty, and functions freely without obstructions, then, they are able to be of no realization and yet always realize the Samadhi of Prajna, to be of no attainment and yet always genuinely attain ultimate emancipation, to be of no mind and yet always manifest the great functions of subtle wisdom, and to be of no effort yet always spontaneously act the bondless great actions.

Chan Master Guizong was adept at applying all kinds of great functions to receive Chan practitioners, for the purpose of directly cutting off their complications; or applying the testing strategy to accurately discern the oncoming potentialities of the practitioners. From the following gongan, it is able to take a glimpse of something :

"When Guizong and his disciples entered into the temple farm and was busy pulling out vegetables, Guizong drew a circle around one vegetable and told the public, 'No one shall move it.' All disciples dared not to pull it out. Latter, Guizong came back and found the vegetable intact. So he started driving the monks with a stick and said, 'This group of fellows ! None of you has wisdom.' "

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 7)*

The related gongan of Chan Master Magu Baoche, who has also attained the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye of Mazu Daoyi, is furthermore cited for reference :

"Once, while walking with Mazu, Chan Master Magu Baoche of Puzhou asked, 'What is the great nirvana ? ' Mazu replied, 'Hurried.' Magu asked, 'What is it that's hurried ? ' Mazu said, 'See the water ! ' Upon hearing these words, Magu was ultimately awakened."

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 7)*

In the Matching Conditions of *Platform Sutra*, Sixth Patriarch Huineng gave an answer to his disciple Zhidao's question about the great meaning of "the real bliss of nirvana" (the perfect rest and cessation is bliss) :



“There is no form of arising in an instant, there is no form of perishing in an instant, and there is also no arising and perishing to be extinguished. It is thus the manifestation of perfect rest and cessation. Furthermore, at the time of manifestation, there is no abiding in manifestation. So it is called the everlasting bliss, which has neither receiver nor non-receiver. ... The supreme great nirvana (mahaparinirvana) is of perfection, brightness and everlasting silence-illumination.”

Hence we know, the great nirvana is the “non-abiding nirvana”, which neither abides in “arising and perishing” and nor in “non-arising and non-perishing”, and it is exactly the “patient rest in non-arising”, and also is the so-called “non-duality of great death and great birth” in the Chan sect. In the Chan Retreats, Chan Patriarchs always ask Chan practitioners to experience a great death, and that is to make a great demand for their putting all deluded thoughts, attachments and habits of ignorance to death. Furthermore, at the same time of great death, there is a great birth, in which the wisdom mind of non-arising manifestation and the compassionate action of effortless spontaneousness become alive. Therefore, from the perspective of the Realm of Chan Enlightenment, the great nirvana is the ultimate pure mind-ground of great freedom, great emancipation, great wisdom, great compassion, great vow and great action. This perfect and bright mind ground is constantly silent thought after thought, together with simultaneous vivid illumination. It is always in silence as well as illumination, also in illumination along with silence, and reaches the ultimate realm of penetration from the deepest to the highest.

As for how to experience the great death for reaching the great birth and to genuinely attain the realization of the great nirvana? In fact, “vexation is bodhi, transmigration is nirvana.” It only needs to not abide in sense objects and to let go of all deluded thinking and attachments, at the very moment the vexation and transmigration are exactly the bodhi and nirvana. Therefore, Chan practitioners merely have to live their ordinary life with the “ordinary mind of pure awareness of self-nature”, and to watch their feet treading solidly on every step, then they are moving every step on the way of great nirvana, and all is naturally manifested without their extra effort. In this case, when Magu asked Mazu about what the great nirvana is, Mazu replied with “hurried” to test Magu’s realization. Because Magu had realized the true reality of all dharmas, consequently he answered with “What is it that’s hurried?” Then, Mazu used “see the water” to punctuate and restore Magu. Upon hearing the words, Magu ultimately realized that all dharmas are not apart from self-nature, and at that very moment realized the ultimate true reality of life. As “water” represents Chan, the Way, or the Marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, thus, “see the water” indicates applying the mind of Chan, the Way or ultimate pure wisdom for responding to the potentiality and associating with all beings according to conditions in daily life. At the right moment that the self-nature of true suchness spontaneously manifests functions, and “as one is real all is real, myriad objects are themselves true suchness as is.”

Chan Master Magu was also adept at applying the strategy of the circle to discern the potentialities and receive Chan practitioners. This can be seen in a segment of a whole from the following case in *The Record of Transmission of the Lamp* :

“A monk asked Magu, “I have a general understanding of the twelve divisions of scripture. What is the meaning of the Patriarch’s coming from the West?” Magu got up,

held the stick to revolve round the body once and stood on one foot, and said, “realize it ?” The monk did not know how to reply. Magu hit him.”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 7)*

The gongan related to Chan Master Dazhu Huihai’s initial investigation with Mazu, the Dharma heir who entered the room of Mazu Daoyi, is worthy of practitioners’ drawing a lesson from :

“Dazhu Huihai came to see Mazu in Jiangxi for the first time. Mazu asked him, ‘Where are you coming from?’ Dazhu said, ‘I am coming from Dayuen Monastery in Yuezhou.’ Mazu asked him, ‘What is your intention of coming here?’ Dazhu said, ‘I have come here to seek the Buddhadharma.’ Mazu said, ‘Without looking after your own treasure, for what purpose are you leaving home and walking around ? Here I do not have a single thing. What Buddhadharma are you seeking for ?’ Dazhu bowed and asked, ‘What is Huihai’s own treasure ?’ Mazu said, ‘That which is asking me right now is your own treasure. All is intrinsically sufficient and it lacks nothing. You are to use it at liberty. Why are you seeking outside?’ Upon hearing the words, Dazhu had an insight into the true mind.”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 6)*

While Chan Master Dazhu Huihai came to visit Mazu for seeking after Chan Dharma, Mazu directly pointed at the Chan mind for him, and advised that “There are myriads of things within there is not a single thing” is truly of ultimate emptiness, yet the ultimate emptiness also manifests innumerable subtle functions and bondless subtle actions; This exactly is all sentient beings’ own treasure, which is of intrinsic possession and sufficiency, of no deficiency and no surplus, of being at liberty in its applications, and of non-interference among all phenomena. Upon receiving the guidance, Dazhu Huihai at the very moment had an insight into the original mind and saw into the original nature. The practitioner in Chan sect makes sure not to neglect your own treasure without looking after it, and just leaves home, walks around and seeks outside. On the contrary, he/she merely becomes an ordinary being, responds to the ordinary matters and lives the ordinary lives with straightforward mind, or ordinary mind, or mind of pure awareness of self-nature. Then, at the right moment he/she is the ordinary person of the Way with nothing to do, and the ordinary leisure-fellow of effortlessness.

Afterwards, Chan Master Dazhu just used “the ordinary mind with nothing to do and of effortlessness” to give advice and guidance to Chan practitioners for Chan investigation : “A monk Youyuan once asked Dazhu Huihai, ‘Do you still have (effortless) effort on the Way ?’ Dazhu said, ‘Yes, I do.’ The monk asked, ‘How to have (effortless) effort ?’ Dazhu said, ‘Eat when you are hungry and sleep when you are tired.’ The monk asked, ‘Does this mean every person is always practicing the same way as the Master ?’ Dazhu said, ‘It’s not the same.’ The monk asked, ‘Why it’s different ?’ Dazhu replied, ‘When people eat, they are unwilling to eat their fill and have hundreds of deluded thoughts. When people sleep, they are unwilling to take their fill of rest and have thousands of discriminations. Therefore, this is the main difference.’ Monk Youyuan kept silent.”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 6)*

Chan Master Dazhu clearly pointed out that, all sentient beings' mind have been defiled for a long time, and their deluded thinking and attachments are impossible to be put into full rest, thus, they cannot eat one-mindedly without all kinds of deluded thoughts while eating, and also cannot sleep one-mindedly without all sorts of discriminations while sleeping. Therefore, they have been in vexation for a long time, have been confused with inverted views, and have turned their backs on awakening and turned around to embrace the illusory sense-dusts, so as to have been wallowing in birth and death in the ocean of suffering. Practitioners of Chan sect merely need to directly harmonize with the ordinary mind of pure awareness of self-nature, and remain unchanging throughout the day. Meanwhile, there is no need to put forth mind power and be diligent, let alone act with effort and be pretentious. Therefore, it is said that to have an insight into the Mind and see into the self-nature, and to attain sudden enlightenment and become a Buddha is the easiest, most natural task. It is something under your control without seeking outward.

Chan Master Xingshan Weikuan (755-817), who is another Dharma heir of Mazu Daoyi, also pointed at the marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan and gave the related discourse :

“A monk asked Xingshan, ‘Does even the dog have Buddha-nature ?’ Xingshan said, ‘Yes.’ The monk asked, ‘Does Master too still have Buddha-nature ?’ Xingshan said, ‘No, I don’t.’ The monk asked, ‘All sentient beings have Buddha-nature, Why only Master does not have it ?’ Xingshan answered, ‘I am not one of all sentient beings.’ The monk asked, ‘Since you are not one of sentient beings, then are you a Buddha ?’ Xingshan answered, ‘Not a Buddha.’ The monk asked again, ‘Then what thing ultimately are you ?’ Xingshan replied, ‘I am also not a thing.’ The monk asked again, ‘Does it can be seen or thought about ?’ Xingshan replied again, ‘It is non-attainable through thinking or discussion. Therefore, it is said that it is inconceivable and ineffable.’ ”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 7)*

Chan Master Xingshan Weikuan pointed out directly that the marrow of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan is inconceivable, just as told by Shakyamuni Buddha that such Dharma could not be realized through thinking and discrimination. Chan Master Yunan Zhenjing in the Song dynasty mentioned : “Provided that there is no deluded mind of self-centeredness, then everything is of brightness and subtlety, everything is the natural true reality, and everything is pure just like the lotus blossom stretching out from the water without the taint of the dripping. Those who confuse in the true mind are sentient beings, and those who awaken to the true mind are buddhas.” Chan Master Zhenjing clearly pointed out that if Chan practitioners have no self-centered discrimination and attachment in their mind in daily life, then anything and any phenomena they are aware of, all are Chan, and also all are the Way. Everything is the manifestation of subtle wisdom, everything is also the spontaneous true reality of Dharma Body, and it is like the lotus flower blooming from the muddy water, yet is pure without defilement as usual. Meanwhile, practitioner's own mind having self-centered discrimination and attachment is confusion, while that without self-centered discrimination and attachment is enlightenment. A confused passing thought makes one an ordinary person, while an enlightened second thought makes one a Buddha. Also being in confusion thought after

thought makes one an ordinary person at any moment, while being in enlightenment thought after thought makes one a Buddha at every moment.

From the above case, it furthermore can be seen that Chan Master Xingshan was adept at the pure awareness of and appropriate responsiveness to the conditions and spiritual needs of the practitioners. In accordance with practitioners' difference of capacity, he was able to give guidance with "sentient being is buddha", or "no sentient being no buddha", or even with "It ultimately is not a thing". Therefore, those Chan practitioners, with the maturity of their karmic roots and conditions, are able to be aware of all dharmas with straightforward mind (ordinary mind) of no thought and no abiding. At the very moment, their Dharma Eye of the mind ground is to be manifested upon hearing the statement, or even they ultimately and suddenly realize that the self-nature can manifest all things, and directly penetrate into the marrow of the mind ground of ineffable one-flavor Chan.

Chan Master Huangbo Xiyun (?-850), the legitimate Dharma-heir of Baizhang Huaihai, had also given guidance with the marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan :

"Now we are getting towards the Dharma-Ending Age, and most Chan practitioners attach to all sorts of sounds and forms. Why do they not copy me by letting go of all deluded mind as though it were the empty space, or as though it were a piece of withered wood, a stone, or as though the cold ashes, a dead fire ? Only in this way, there is just then in slight harmony with each other. ... You merely need to be apart from clinging to all dharmas of existence and non-existence, let your mind be like the sun that always in the empty space with spontaneous brightness, and be illuminating of no illumination. Is this not something that can be accomplished without effort ? When you reach this point of clinging to nothing whatever, you are acting as the Buddhas act, and are indeed acting in accordance with 'the mind arises without abiding in anything.'"

*(Chan Master Huangbo Duanji's Teaching on Essentials of the Transmission of Mind Dharma)*

In his *Essentials of the Transmission of Mind Dharma*, Chan Master Huangbo distinctly pointed out that, Chan practitioners only have to be of direct no-mind, that is to be directly and tacitly compatible with the ordinary mind of no-abiding awareness, and to let go of all dharmas of attachment and non-attachment, so as to put all conceivability and mind juggleries to rest forever, and experience the so-called "the path of words being dissolved, the volition of the deluded mind being set at full rest". Thus, just like the sun always in the empty space, which is shining very naturally, universally and perpetually, and nevertheless is not illuminating to any special object, purpose and reason, the Chan practitioner's mind is frequently aware of all dharmas including people, matters and things with prajna wisdom, and yet is not abiding in anything and is clinging to nothing whatsoever. This indicates that the Chan practitioner has realized the realm of "no obstructions in the mind", and walks hand-in-hand with all the Buddhas with great emancipation and great freedom. Meanwhile, the function of the Wisdom of All Aspects, which has been penetrated by "the mind arises without abiding in anything," spontaneously manifests in front of all sentient beings with both non-abiding and clear discernment as well as complete awareness.

In the *Blue Cliff Record*, there was a gongan, related to Chan Master Huangbo Xiyuan, that is worthy of Chan practitioner's investigation :

“Huangbo, instructing the congregation, said, ‘You people are all dreg-slurpers. If you go on a pilgrimage seeking in this way, where would you be able to ever realize the great matters that's before you today ? Do you know that there are no Chan Masters in all the great Tang ? ’ At that time a monk came forward and asked, ‘Then what about those worthies in various places who render assistance and guidance to all practitioners ? ’ Huangbo said, ‘I didn't say there is no Chan, just that there are no Masters.’”  
*(The Blue Cliff Record; The Eleventh Case — Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu)*

One day, Chan Master Huangbo entered the hall and saw that a very large assembly of practitioners had gathered. He then used his staff to drive them away and gave the following discourse : “All of you are entirely gobblers of dregs. As soon as you see eight hundred or a thousand people gathered somewhere, you immediately go there to seek out the hubbub. If you travel around like this, you will just earn people's laughter. When I was traveling on pilgrimage and came upon some sharp-rooted practitioners, I would give them pressing and see if they are able to attain realization, and thus make an offering to them with something from an overflowing rice bag. If you people want to call what you're doing a ‘pilgrimage’, then you should apply with a little spirit. Do you know that in all the great Tang there are no Chan Masters ? ” A monk then asked, “In all directions there are worthies altogether expounding to all practitioners. Why do you say there are no Chan Masters ? ” Huangbo said, “I didn't say there is no Chan, just that there are no Masters. Have you not ever seen that although Chan Master Mazu had eighty-four Dharma-heirs, only two or three of them genuinely attained Mazu's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye. One of them is Chan Master Guizong Zhichang of Mt. Lu.”

I dare to ask all of Chan practitioners, “What is a Master amidst Chan ? ” Please say something ! As a matter of fact, “Chan is intrinsically of no Master, and no Master is genuine Chan.” When the causes and conditions of Chan Investigation become mature, and upon hearing “There are no Chan Masters all over the world today” or “No Chan and no Master”, Chan practitioners with sharp karmic roots will receive tapping or shouting at the very moment of deluded thinking. However, if Chan practitioners are able to straightly turn around, then they by all means will penetrate into the marrow of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan, and directly share the same breath together with all Buddhas and Patriarchs/Matriarchs.

Chan Master Linji Yixuan, the Dharma heir of Huangbo Xiyuan, had also instructed the Dharma gate of the mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan :

“Chan Master Linji addressed the congregation, saying, ‘Followers of the Way, as to the Buddhadharma, effortlessness is necessary. You only have to be with ordinary mind, and with nothing to do except defecating, urinating, wearing clothes, eating food, and lying down when tired. Fools laugh at me, but the wise actualize. The ancient worthy said that those who seek outward are just a bunch of ignorant persons. Therefore, just be your own master of every situation, and the very standing place itself is the true reality. No matter what circumstances come they cannot turn you around. Even though there are past

habitual patterns and five uninterrupted karmas, these of themselves are the ocean of emancipation.””

*(The Discourse Record of Chan Master Linji Huizhao)*

Chan Master Linji Yixuan obviously and directly points at the Chan Dharma (the Buddhadharmas) that it is only of no mind and no things, and of functionlessness and effortlessness. That is to say, in ordinary daily activities, no matter in wearing clothes and eating food, cleaning and sweeping, carrying water and moving wood, working and exercising, bathing and defecating, resting and sleeping, etc., Chan practitioners merely have to live their ordinary pure life with the ordinary mind or the mind of pure awareness of self-nature, then they are able to be their own masters at any time and in any place, and at every right moment suddenly see into the true reality of all dharmas. Even more they will become the host among hosts, and are always compatible with true reality of the Dharma Realm of One Reality. Thus, situations occurred cannot turn the already manifested pure mind around. Furthermore, even if there are such matters as habits of ignorance and karmas without beginning, these essentially are the wisdom-ocean of great enlightenment with great emancipation and great freedom.

Chan Master Linji Yixuan once gave a discourse in the Dharma Hall :

“On this lump of red flesh is a real person of no level who often comes in and out right before your face. Whoever has not realized this should investigate diligently. At that point a monk came up and asked, ‘What is the real person of no level?’ The Master stepped down from the Chan couch, took hold of the monk and said, ‘Speak, speak!’ While the monk was about to deliberate, the Master let go of him and said, ‘The real person of no level is no more than a dry shit-stick!’ He then went back to the abbot’s room immediately.”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Linji Huizhao)*

Chan Master Linji’s offering of a dry shit-stick aims at reminding all good fellow-practitioners on the Chan path to make sure they avoid immediately attaching to “the real person of no level” once they have heard it, and to bear in mind that “the real person of no level” is indeed ultimately empty and non-attainable. Moreover, the ultimately enlightened Chan practitioner has from this moment been promoted to a “real person of no level,” and has to continue from this day on “the upward one way of transcendence,” galloping down the Chan path in order to dissolve habits of ignorance and universally instruct seemingly illusory sentient beings in compliance with the causes and conditions. Some day in the future, he or she is just then able to have the true actualization of attaining the ultimate Buddhahood of supreme and complete enlightenment.

Chan Master Guishan Lingyou, the Dharma heir of Chan Master Baizhang Huaihai, had applied the Dharma gate of the mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan for guiding his disciple, Chan Master Yangshan Huiji, to suddenly have an insight into the original mind and immediately see into the original nature :

“Yangshan went to investigate Chan under Guishan for the first time. Guishan asked, ‘As a novice do you have a host or not?’ Yangshan answered, ‘I have one.’ Guishan asked, ‘Where is it?’ Yangshan walked from west to east and then stood still. Guishan realized that Yangshan was extraordinary. Yangshan asked, ‘What is the dwelling of the

genuine Buddha ? ’ Guishan said, ‘Turning inward to be purely aware of the inexhaustible pure Mind with the subtle function of pure awareness of no pure-awareness. When reaching the ultimate pure awareness, you have returned to the source, where the self-nature and forms are realized permanently and simultaneously, the noumena and phenomena are of non-duality, and the genuine Buddha is just exactly the true suchness.’ Upon hearing these words, Yangshan experienced great enlightenment.”  
*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Yangshan Huiji)*

When Yangshan Huiji asked Guishan Lingyou about the dwelling of the genuine Buddha, at that very moment, Guishan directly pointed at the marrow of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan, that it lies in turning inward to “be purely aware of the self-nature” (purely aware of the Mind), and perfectly illuminating the form of pure awareness with non-abiding awareness or the ordinary mind of pure awareness of self-nature. Yangshan had originally turned inward to do it in simple and direct way, and pushed as well as pressed himself to the end of hills and rivers. Meanwhile, upon having heard Guishan’s guidance, he suddenly put all his deluded mind into full rest in one thought at the right moment, and was completely enlightened to the true mind through one transcendence and direct penetration, which was just like seeing into his dear father at a crossroads without any further suspicion.

By way of the following gongan, let us continue to take a look at the marrow of the mind ground of Yangshan Huiji and Xiangyan Zhixian after their awakening :  
“Yangshan and Xiangyan waited on and stood on both sides of their Master Guishan Lingyou. Guishan said, ‘All Buddhas of the past, present and future commonly realize the Supreme Way, and all sentient beings altogether attain the Way of emancipation.’ Yangshan asked, ‘What is all sentient beings’ Way of emancipation ? ’ Guishan looked back at Xiangyan and said, ‘Since Huiji asks the question, would you answer him ? ’ Xiangyan said, ‘If talk about the past, present and future, I have a response.’ Guishan said, ‘What is your response ? ’ Xiangyan withdrew with no response. Then, Guishan asked Yangshan, ‘Is Zhixian’s response compatible with you ? ’ Yangshan replied, ‘no compatibility.’ Guishan said, ‘What is your response ? ’ Yangshan also withdrew with no response. Guishan roared with laughter and said, ‘It is like the unity of water and milk.’”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Guishan Lingyou)*

After sudden realization of their self-nature, one day Chan Master Guishan Lingyou again directly pointed at the profound principle of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan for Yangshan Huiji and Xiangyan Zhixian as follows : “All Buddhas in the ten directions and three times have the same realization of the great Way of supreme Bodhi, and this great Way is the pure mind of self -nature which is either of perfection, brightness, everlasting silence and everlasting illumination, or of permanent movability, permanent immovability, non-arising and non-perishing. Furthermore, all sentient beings in the whole universe, who altogether are potential Buddhas, are able to genuinely realize the ultimate great Way of emancipation from ultimate no-realization and no-attainment.” Yangshan forthwith asked about what all sentient beings’ Way of ultimate emancipation is. By means of this, Master Guishan inquired about Xiangyan’s realization, and Xiangyan left with silence. Then, Guishan turned to Yangshan and asked whether

Xiangyan's response was compatible with the profound principle. While Yangshan gave an answer of no compatibility, Guishan further inquired about Yangshan's realization. At that very moment, Yangshan also left with silence. Finally, aiming at Yangshan and Xiangyan's actualization of ultimate emptiness in "no bond and no emancipation," Guishan immediately praised with "It is of complete mutual harmonization."

Chan Master Dongshan Liangjia, the Dharma grand heir of Yaoshan Weiyuan and the Dharma heir of Yunyan Tancheng, addressed to the assembly with the Dharma gate of mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan as follows :

"Dongshan entered the hall and said, 'Fellow practitioners, it is the beginning of autumn, and the end of summer. You should not go east or west, but directly to that place where, for ten-thousand miles around, there is not a single blade of grass.' After pausing for a while he asked, 'How do you go to a place where there is not a single blade of grass for ten-thousand miles around?' Then, he looked around and said, 'If you wish to realize this matter, you directly have to be like dry wood putting forth blossoms. Then you will be in conformity with it.' Later, one monk went to Shishuang Qingzhu's place. Shishuang asked, 'What discourse did Master Dongshan address to his disciples?' The monk mentioned the previous Dharma talk. Shishuang asked, 'Did anyone give an answer?' The monk replied, 'No one.' Shishuang said, 'Why didn't someone say, 'As soon as you go out the door, there is grass everywhere'?' Master Dongshan, hearing of this response from the monk, said, 'This is the sayings of the completely enlightened Master for one thousand and five hundred disciples. How many are there for such masters within the country of the Great Tang?'"

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Dongshan Wuben)*

For the guidance of Chan practitioners, Chan Master Dongshan Liangjia directly pointed to the marrow of the mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan that it lies in applying the frequent and straight action with "the awareness of no thought and no abiding" (the straightforward mind of pure awareness of self-nature) in ordinary daily life, no matter whether you are walking, standing, sitting, reclining, or responding to the potentiality and associating with all beings. Therefore, at the very moment you are able to directly arrive at the place where there is not a single blade of grass for ten-thousand miles around, and that is to say, you genuinely realize the great Way just like dry wood putting forth blossoms. In other words, you are able to directly actualize "originally there is not a single thing," so that you are "reverting to the origin and returning to the source" and then "entering the marketplace with open hands." Or even more you can penetrate through "there are a myriad of things in the midst of not a single thing" is also ultimate empty," and straightly have an ultimate taste of Caoxi waters' flavor of "all things of ultimate subtle-existence are in perfect harmony." Then, you have to continue "the transmission of the water of Cao Creek" (lineage transmission) in the spirit of "an Heir to Patriarch and a Master of Posterity," and should not let such Treasury of the True Dharma Eye be extinguished upon reaching those blind donkeys.

Chan Master Dongshan Liangjia was also adept at making use of all kinds of wise strategy for 'being purely aware of and appropriately responding to the potentialities of the practitioners'. Please see the following case :



“A monk asked Dongshan, ‘When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them ? ’  
Dongshan said, ‘Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat ? ’ The  
monk asked, ‘What is the place where there is no cold or heat ? ’ Dongshan said, ‘When  
it's cold, the cold kills you. When it's hot, the heat kills you.’”  
*(The Blue Cliff Record; Forty-third Case — Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu)*

When the Chan practitioner inquired about “how to avoid the cold and the heat,” Chan Master Dongshan gave a clear indication of “going directly to the place where there is no cold or heat.” That is to guide the Chan practitioner to merely apply the ordinary mind of pure awareness of self-nature, for straightly realizing “originally there is not a thing,” as well as returning to the source and seeing into the self-nature; or even for directly and ultimately actualizing the Dharma Realm of One Reality, in which the ultimate true-emptiness and ultimate subtle-existence are indeed of non-duality, and it is merely the point of your clinging to nothing whatsoever. Meanwhile, the Wisdom of All Aspects is ultimately empty in essence, yet its function spontaneously manifests at the time of giving rise to activity, which consists in “the awareness without attaching to the situations and the illumination without clinging to the objects,” therefore, all is intrinsically ready-made, every dharma is of perfect harmony, and all phenomena is of non-interference.

Chan Master Yumen Wenyan, the Dharma grand heir of Deshan Xuanjian (782-865) and the Dharma heir of Xuefeng Yicun (822-908), discoursed to the congregation on the marrow of the mind ground related to the Suddenness Chan :

“Yumen said, ‘I don't ask you about that before the fifteenth day; try to say something about that after the fifteenth day.’ Yumen himself answered for everyone, ‘Every day is a good day.’”  
*(The Blue Cliff Record; The Sixth Case — Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu)*

Among Master Yumen's discourse to the Chan practitioners, the former two sentences has already absorbed and dissolved all different discriminations and attachments, and has put the abiding in the duality of saint and ordinary people down. The latter answer in everyone's behalf even has passed through both the ancient and modern, and has set the deluded mind at full rest all at once from before until after. If Chan practitioners respond to the daily matters with the straightforward mind (the ordinary mind or the mind of pure awareness of self-nature), then they are able to let go of all deluded thoughts and self-centered attachment, so that the wild mind is suddenly at full rest and they attain complete enlightenment. Furthermore, they continue on “the upward one way of transcendence” to complete “maintaining the spontaneousness & effortlessness,” and at the very moment ultimately realize “every day is a good day.” At this time, everywhere is the Pure Land on the planet Earth, and every moment is in harmony with Chan and the Way.

Another case related to Chan Master Yumen Wenyan in the “*Blue Cliff Record*” is also cited for reference :

“A monk asked Yumen, ‘What is Each-and-Every-Dust Samadhi ? ’ Yumen said, ‘Rice in the bowl, water in the bucket.’”  
*(The Blue Cliff Record; The Fiftieth Case — Chan Master Foguo Yuanwu)*

In the Chapter on Bodhisattva Foremost in Virtue of *Avatamsaka Sutra*, Sakyamuni Buddha preached about “Each-and-Every-Dust Samadhi” as follows : “Entry into samadhi in each dust accomplishes all samadhis within every dust; yet there is no increasing in that one dust which universally manifests inconceivable worlds.” Once upon a time, there was a monk who asked Chan Master Yumen about “What is Each-and-Every-Dust Samadhi ? ” While straightly responding with “Rice in the bowl, water in the bucket,” Master Yumen obviously gave a direct pointing at the marrow of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan that it is the Dharma Realm of the One Reality in which there is non-interference among all phenomena. Chan practitioners, who have ultimate and complete realization in “patient rest in non-arising,” have just now directly actualized the realms of all Buddhas regarding non-arising & manifestation and effortlessness & spontaneousness, together with having penetrated into all dharmas and having ascended the rank of Buddhahood at the right moment.

Chan Master Luohan Guichen (867-928), the Dharma grand heir of Xuefeng Yicun, gave guidance to his Dharma heir Chan Master Fayang Wenyi with the Dharma gate of the mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, and let him see into the original face and manifest the scenery of the mind ground :

“While on a pilgrimage with some other monks, Fayang and his friends were adjourned by a rainstorm with sharply rising stream and forced to stay at the Dizang Monastery located at the west of Fuzhou City. They investigated with Luohan Guichen, who served as the abbot there. Guichen asked, ‘Where are you going ? ’ Fayang replied, ‘On an extending pilgrimage.’ Guichen said, ‘Why do you go on a pilgrimage ? ’ Fayang replied, ‘I don’t know.’ Guichen said, ‘No knowing is most intimate.’ At these words Fayang suddenly experienced enlightenment. One day, the three monks bade farewell and started to depart. Guichen accompanied them to the gate and said, ‘I’ve heard you say several times that the three realms are mind-only and the myriad dharmas are consciousness-only.’ Then Guichen pointed to a rock lying on the ground by the gate and said, ‘What do you say that this rock is inside or outside of mind ? ’ Fayang said, ‘Inside.’ Guichen said, ‘How can a pilgrim carry such a heavy rock in his mind while on pilgrimage ? ’ Fayang was dumbfounded and couldn’t answer. He put his luggage down and investigated Chan with Guichen to seek for digging the reality out. Each day for the next month or so Fayang spoke about the Way with Guichen and demonstrated his realization. Guichen would always say, ‘The Buddhadharma isn’t like this.’ Finally, Fayang said, ‘I’ve run out of words and actualization.’ Guichen said, ‘If talking about Buddhadharma, everything embodies it.’ Upon hearing these words, Fayang experienced great enlightenment.”  
*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 24) & (The Discourse Records of Chan Master Qingliang Wenyi)*

When Fayang Wenyi mentioned about “not knowing about going on a pilgrimage,” Chan Master Luohan Guichen straightly pointed at the Mind with “no knowing is most intimate,” and Fayang suddenly realized the self-nature at the very moment. The so-called “knowing” by mankind is delusion, and “not knowing” is oblivion. Nevertheless, only “no knowing” of Chan sect is the real knowing, also is just then the genuine realization of

the profound principle of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan with “non-abiding awareness” (pure awareness of no self), and this exactly is the true meaning of “no knowing is most intimate” in Guichen's discourse. Afterwards, Chan Master Guichen even used “If talking about Buddhadharma, everything embodies it” to turn Fayan around for his deep enlightenment to the great meaning of Patriarch/Matriarch's Suddenness Chan. Patriarch/Matriarch Chan Dharma is originally of perfection, self-sufficiency, and intrinsic embodiment. If Chan practitioners, no matter when or where they are responding to any person, any matter or anything in their daily life, all are able to maintain the ordinary mind or straightforward mind of ultimate pure awareness, which consists in no self-centeredness, no discrimination and no attachment, as well as no vexation, no worry and no obstructions; then, all their living experiences at every right moment are the Chan Dharma of intrinsic embodiment, the wisdom of great potentiality and great function, and the world of true peace, harmony, altruism and happiness, together with the true reality of life of ultimate no form.

The following case, which is related to Chan Master Fayan Wenyi's “being purely aware of and appropriately responding to the potentialities of the practitioners,” is cited for reference :

“A monk asked, ‘Without asking about the finger, what is the moon ? ’ Fayan said, ‘It's the finger without asking.’ The monk asked again, ‘Without asking about the moon, what is the finger ? ’ Fayan said, ‘The moon.’ The monk said, ‘I am asking about the finger, why Venerable Master answers with the moon ? ’ Fayan said, ‘Because you are asking about the finger.’”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Qingliang Wenyi)*

Patriarch/Matriarch Chan is just the Dharma gate of the mind ground relevant to “direct pointing at the Mind, seeing into the self-nature and attaining Buddhahood.” The Patriarch/Matriarch points a finger at the moon for Chan practitioners, and gives guidance to them about “just applying this pure mind to directly realize the supreme Buddhahood.” Therefore, Chan practitioners, who always act with straightforward mind (mind of pure awareness of self-nature) in their daily activities, straightly actualize the pure self-nature and forget the pointing finger after seeing the moon for themselves. Even more, they directly ascend the rank of Buddhahood with upward one way of transcendence, along with ultimately and completely realizing the Chan realm of “no moon and no finger” (no Buddha and no sentient beings). When a monk asked about “no asking about the finger, what is the moon ?”, Chan Master Fayan Wenyi answered with “the finger of no asking”; then when the monk again asked about “no asking about the moon, what is the finger ?”, Fayan answered with “the moon”. If Chan practitioners have experienced “putting down all conditions and letting not one thought arise,” upon hearing the response, they are able to directly turn around and reach immediately home to their true nature.

Chan Master Huanglong Huinan, the seven-generation Dharma heir of Linji Yixuan, had given a discourse to the public with the Dharma gate of the mind ground of Suddenness Chan :

“Huanglong went into the hall and said, ‘The precious pearl on the hand differentiates its lights by following the numerous colors, and the treasure moon in the sky manifests its shadows by going over ten-thousand rivers. All the benevolents ! Every question and answer as well as one tapping and one shouting are lights and shadows. Every brightness and darkness along with one capturing and one releasing are lights and shadows. The mountain, the river and the great earth are lights and shadows. The sun, the moon and the stars are lights and shadows. The whole Buddhist cannons of all Buddhas in three times, together with the immense varieties of swarming with visitors for all great Patriarchs (or Matriarchs) and Masters, are all lights and shadows. What do you say which is the pearl and which is the moon ? If you do not realize the pearl or the moon and involve yourself with reading words and sentences as well as clinging to the lights and the shadows, it is as if entering into the sea to count the sands or grinding a brick to make a mirror. It is absolutely unattainable for seeking in this way so frequently and wishing to have a genuine insight. ....

Counting the sands in the sea is all wasting one's effort, and making a mirror by grinding a brick is also wasting time and energy. Have you not seen that the cloud above the high mountain rolls up or rolls out spontaneously without abiding in intimacy or alienation, and that the water in deep mountain stream comes across a crook or meets with a straight without clinging to this or that ? All sentient beings, whose daily matters are just like phenomena of the cloud and the water, do not respond to them with the same ways as those of the cloud and the water. Otherwise, where does the transmigration of the three realms arise ? ’ Huanglong ascended the seat.”  
*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan)*

Chan Master Huanglong Huinan clearly pointed out that the bright moon in the sky manifests its shadows along with ten-thousand rivers. In their Chan investigation, Chan practitioners would not throw themselves into it with total dedication and not be grounded, and would always wallow in the fleeting experiences of lights and shadows with clinging and attaching to them, or abide in the manifestations of their own consciousness with discriminating and musing about this and that. Therefore, it seems that “they only trouble themselves with counting the sands in the sea” and “they uselessly investigate with mistaking the finger for the moon,” then when will they be able to directly penetrate through the great matters of their mind capacity ? When will they straightly see into the self-nature and attain Buddhahood ?

Chan Master Huanglong further distinctly indicated that all daily matters of sentient beings are just like phenomena of the cloud and the water, which is naturally revealed as “the cloud above the high mountain rolls up or rolls out spontaneously without abiding in intimacy or alienation,” and “the water in deep mountain stream comes across a crook or meets with a straight without clinging to this or that.” Therefore, if Chan practitioners are able to merely act with the straightforward mind, or ordinary mind, or mind of non-abiding awareness in their daily matters, no matter wearing clothes, eating food, lying down when tired, or four great demeanors such as walking, standing, sitting and reclining; then they will straightly be compatible with “sudden letting go of all attachments to people and dharma,” “setting all conditions at full rest,” as well as “in an instant putting all deluded thoughts into rest forever,” and even will directly reach the ultimate and

complete realm of non-arising. Hereafter, in accord with conditions and in harmony with phenomena, they will naturally manifest the functions of their own inexhaustible treasure with vowlessness, effortlessness, spontaneousness and freedom.

Chan Master Huanglong further applied the great potentiality and function of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan for guiding Chan practitioners :

“Huanglong entered the hall and said, ‘The Dharma body is formless, but it manifests forms in response to things. Prajna wisdom is no knowing, but it illuminates in accord with the conditions.’ Huanglong then lifted his whisk and said, ‘The setting up of the whisk is called the Dharma body. Wouldn't it manifest forms in response to things ? The bringing down of the whisk is called prajna wisdom. Wouldn't it illuminate in accord with the conditions ? ’ Huanglong then roared with laughter.”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Huanglong Huinan)*

By setting up the whisk, Chan Master Huanglong directly pointed out that the formless Dharma body nevertheless manifests forms in response to things (no no-form). Meanwhile, by bringing down the whisk, he distinctly indicated that the no-knowing prajna wisdom is nevertheless illuminating in accordance with the conditions (no no-knowing). For Chan practitioners of extraordinary realization, have you ever been compatible with it ? As to the general practitioners of Chan investigation, please first of all put down all conditions and let not one thought arise, and then apply genuine investigation with diligence, so that you will be able to instantly penetrate through all deluded thoughts and attachments, and to suddenly realize bodhi of insight into mind.

Chan Master Yangqi Fanghui, the seventh-generation Dharma heir of Linji Yixuan, had also given a discourse to the public with the marrow of the mind ground of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan :

“Yangqi entered the hall. A monk asked, ‘What is the realm of Yangqi ? ’ Yangqi said, ‘A single pine tree is graceful on the edge of a precipice, An ape howls by facing downwards the mountains.’ The monk asked, ‘What is the person amidst the realm ? ’ Yangqi said, ‘A woman of poverty carrying a basket goes to the marketplace, An oxherder bringing down the flute returns home towards the supreme source.’ Yangqi further said, ‘The fog fills the vast sky, and the wind blows the great fields. Both the grass and the trees, like a great lion's roar, preach the Dharma of Mahaprajnaparamita. All the Buddhas of the three times turn the great Dharma Wheel under the heels of each of you. If you realize this, then your effort is not in vain. If you don't realize, then don't say that the terrain of Mt. Yangqi is precipitous, because there is still the highest summit in the front.’”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Yangqi Fanghui)*

One day when Chan Master Yangqi Fanghui was in the Chan hall, a monk asked about “the realm of Yangqi” and “the person amidst the realm,” Master Yangqi straightly and respectively responded with the verses regarding “every dharma is of perfect harmony, and all phenomena is of non-interference,” which are “A single pine tree is graceful on the edge of a precipice, An ape howls by facing downwards the mountains” and “A woman of poverty carrying a basket goes to the marketplace, An oxherder bringing down

the flute returns home towards the supreme source.” Owing to Yangqi's compassion, he subsequently and straightforwardly pointed at the mind source of Suddenness Chan for Chan practitioners with “A myriad of things, like a great lion's roar, preach the Mind Dharma of ‘The Supreme Awakening of Great Wisdom;’ All the Buddhas of the three times, under the heels of Chan practitioners, directly turn the great Dharma Wheel of non-arising and effortlessness.”

Furthermore, Yangqi gave an indication to Chan practitioners about that “If you have been compatible with the profound principle, then your effortless effort is not wasted,” and “If you still have not been compatible with it, then make sure not to attach to that the terrain of Mt. Yangqi is too precipitous to reach, and even get confused about that there is still the highest peak (the fruit of supreme Buddhahood) in the front.” All seasoned Chan practitioners ! Upon hearing “The fog fills the vast sky, The wind blows the great fields,” have you suddenly realized it ? If you have realized it, then I take it for granted that you already have an eye. If not, please be purely aware of all dharmas (phenomena) with pure mind of self-nature (ordinary mind or straightforward mind) of no thought, no form and no abiding, which at every right moment gives rise to all thoughts according to the conditions without attaching to the thoughts, and is free from forms in the midst of forms, as well as “without abiding in anything, the Mind arises,” then the prajna wisdom of the mind ground is just able to be manifested. And thus go forward with upward one way of transcendence and suddenly penetrate into the Chan realm of great emancipation and great freedom.

Chan Master Yangqi Fanghui had also used the great potentiality and great function of Suddenness Chan to guide Chan practitioners :

“Yangqi entered the hall and said, ‘One is all, all is one.’ Then he picked up the staff and said, ‘It swallows the mountains, the rivers and the great earth. All the Buddhas of the past and the future as well as all venerable old monks of the nation always on the head of the staff.’ As a result, he drew a line by the staff and said, ‘It's not necessary to give a shout.’”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Yangqi Fanghui)*

From the above mentioned “The staff swallows the mountains, the rivers and the great earth”, or “All the Buddhas of the three times as well as all Patriarchs/Matriarchs and Masters of the world turn the great Dharma Wheel on the tip of the staff,” It is evident that Chan Master Yangqi uses one staff to distinctly indicate that “In the multiple and endless Dharma Realm, one dharma and all dharmas are of interbeing and interpenetration, that is to say, all things are in perfect harmony and unhindered interconnectedness.” In fact, only this one staff has already perfectly possessed all dharmas, and has completely accomplished all subtle functions, so that it is superfluous to give a further shout. Therefore, Chan Master Yangqi drew a line by the staff and said that it was unnecessary to give a shout.

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao (1089-1163), the fourth-generation Dharma heir of Yangqi Fanghui, had used the Mind Dharma of Suddenness Chan to guide Layman Miaozheng :

“Chan lies neither in quiet places, nor in noisy places, nor in places of thinking and discrimination, nor in places responding to the conditions of daily matters. Although it is like this, first of all you are not allowed to investigate it with departing from the quiet places, the noisy places, the places responding to the conditions of daily affairs, and the places of thinking and discrimination. Then, all of a sudden your eyes are open and realize that all are your own business.”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Dahui Pujue; Volume 19)*

In the above discourse, Chan Master Dahui mentioned that Chan does not consist in places of quietness, noisiness, response to the conditions of daily matters, as well as thinking and discrimination, however, you should inquire into it without departing from all places. Concerning “What is the genuine investigation ?” In the discourse to Layman Miaoming, Yangqi gave the following clear indication : “Provided that in the response to the conditions, there is no arrangement, no effortful effort, and also no deluded mind of self-centeredness for thinking, discriminating and arguing ; then you naturally become free from desires and relying, no abiding in effortfulness and no falling into effortless, along with no discriminating about mundane and supramundane. Therefore, this is the sixth style of being not ignorant of the original face in the four great demeanors of daily activities.” The discourse of Chan Master Dahui obviously pointed out that if Chan practitioners apply the mind of non-abiding pure awareness (ordinary mind or straightforward mind) for responding to the conditions and associating with all beings in ordinary daily activities, then at every right moment it is just the sectarian style of being not ignorant of the original face, and they are able to straightly attain the Chan Dharma, together with suddenly opening their Dharma Eye of the mind ground, suddenly manifesting their own spiritual treasury, and maintaining effortless and spontaneous in their own business.

In the Jingshan Nengren Chan Monastery, Chan Master Dahui had given a discourse to the public :

“Dahui entered the hall and said, ‘Patriarch Sengcan said that "If the mind-eye does not close, all dreams will naturally cease of themselves. If the mind does not discriminate, all dharmas are of one true suchness." What is the non-closing mind-eye ? What is the non-discriminating mind ? The mountain flowers are blossoming as an embroidery, The stream water is crystal-clear as deep-blue in color.’”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Dahui Pujue; Volume 3)*

Chan Master Dahui used two sentences from *Faith In Mind* of the Third Patriarch Sengcan to preach to the congregation. The former, “If the mind-eye does not close, all dreams will naturally cease of themselves,” expresses that if Chan practitioner's Dharma Eye of the mind ground is not confused by the habits of ignorance, he or she is surely able to become ultimately and completely awakening from the whole great dream on the Chan path, which comprises the illusory dream of “entering into the realm of cessation (nirvana).” The latter, “If the mind does not discriminate, all dharmas are of one true suchness,” signifies that if the Chan practitioner's mind ground is all compatible with the ordinary mind of “non-duality of samadhi and wisdom” on all occasions, he or she is certainly able to ultimately and completely realize “all myriad of dharmas are not apart from the self-nature of true suchness,” and even “the self-nature of true suchness is able

to manifest myriad of dharmas.” Moreover, Chan Master Pujue further asked about “What is the non-closing mind-eye ? What is the non-discriminating mind ?” And then he himself answered for everyone with “The mountain flowers are blossoming as an embroidery, The stream water is crystal-clear as deep-blue in color.” All seasoned Chan practitioners ! Have you yet realized Dahui's answer on everyone's behalf ? If not, please directly drink or sip a single drop of water from the spring at Caoxi, and directly actualize the profound principle of the self-nature or straightly turn around and walk the path of “returning directly home to your true nature.” That is to say, everything manifests its true reality at the very moment, or someday in the future you will be able to ultimately taste the water flavor of the Cao Creek, which implies that there is non-interference among all phenomena.

Chan Master Hongzhi Zhengjue (1091-1157), the ninth-generation Dharma heir of Dongshan Liangjia, had also applied the marrow of the Patriarch/Matriarch Chan for guiding Chan practitioners :

“Hongzhi said in an informal Dharma talk, ‘Good brothers ! One falling leaf is indicative of the coming of autumn under the heaven, and a raising dust shows the complete taking-in of the great earth. While picking it up, it is perfectly throughout the Dharma Realm and its function is infinite. While putting it down, it is naturally pure and its emptiness is out of all dualities.’ Later, Hongzhi entered the hall and said, ‘Its essence is completely empty, yet universally responding. Its function is completely of subtle existence, yet always compatible with the suchness. Therefore, the ancient worthy said, ‘The green mountain is the father of the white cloud, and the white cloud the son of the green mountain. The white cloud leans against the green mountain all day long, but the green mountain always has no knowing.’ All Learned Audience ! Since it is so for the whole-day leaning of the white cloud, why does the green mountain have no knowing ? Have you realized it yet ? A wild bird chirps by itself and the flower smiles of its own accord, It is irrelevant to Chan practitioner on the edge of a precipice.’”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Hongzhi; Volume 1 )*

Chan Master Hongzhi Zhengjue directly guided Chan practitioners, who joined the informal Dharma talk, with the marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan : Those who are compatible with the so-called “One falling leaf is indicative of the coming of autumn under the heaven, and a raising dust shows the complete taking-in of the great earth,” have exactly ultimately realized the Chan realm of “one and all are of interbeing and interpenetration,” which is embodied in the expression “all things are in perfect harmony and unhindered interconnectedness.” These Chan practitioners, who have an eye on the forehead, are able to manifest all innumerable subtle functions and limitless subtle actions, which is perfectly throughout the Dharma Realm and in accordance with the conditions in their daily activities. Meanwhile, at the very moment those infinite subtle functions and subtle actions are also of ultimate emptiness and out of all dualities.

Furthermore, Chan Master Hongzhi also gave the formal Dharma talk to the public : The essence of the self-nature of true suchness is ultimately empty, and yet able to manifest great potentialities and great functions for responding to all beings in compliance with the conditions. And all these great functions and great actions of



expedient means for delivering sentient beings, at the very moment are of non-duality with ultimately empty self-nature of true suchness. Therefore, Chan Patriarch Dongshan Liangjia had just then made known to the public with the verse of “The green mountain is the father of the white cloud, and the white cloud the son of the green mountain. The white cloud leans against the green mountain all day long, but the green mountain always has no knowing.” Master Hongzhi further asked the audience about “Have you realized it yet ?” And then he himself answered for everyone with “A wild bird chirps by itself and the flower smiles of its own accord, It is irrelevant to Chan practitioner on the edge of a precipice.” As for Chan practitioner with eyes, who has already realized Hongzhi's answer on everyone's behalf, at the right moment has a smile and keeps silent, or shakes his/her sleeves and goes away. As to Chan practitioners, who are still under genuine investigation, please say something !

Chan Master Hongzhi picked the ancient worthies' discourses and proclaimed to the public in the Dharma hall :

“A monk quoted a verse of Chan Master Wolun, ‘Wolun has a skill, which is able to cut off hundreds of thoughts. When the mind does not arise in face of the sense objects, the bodhi (enlightenment) grows day by day.’ When Sixth Patriarch Huineng heard this and said, ‘Huineng has no skill, which is unable to cut off hundreds of thoughts. The mind arises again and again in face of the sense objects, how can the bodhi (enlightenment) grow ?’ Hongzhi said, ‘The sunflower always turns to the sun, The willow catkins frequently fly with the wind.’”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Hongzhi; Volume 3)*

Chan Master Hongzhi first talked about the Gradualness Chan of Wolun, which lies in “If you want to attain realization of the Way, it is necessary to practice sitting Chan and cultivate samadhi. No one has ever attained emancipation but for meditative concentration.” Then, he discoursed to the public about the Suddenness Chan of Huineng, which consists in “direct insight into the true mind, direct seeing into the true nature, straight realizing the true suchness, and straight attaining Buddhahood.” The Sixth Patriarch Huineng emphasizes that “The self-nature of bodhi is intrinsically pure. Just apply this pure mind to directly realize the supreme Buddhahood.” Therefore, Chan practitioners merely have to live their ordinary life with the pure mind of the self-nature, and at the present moment it is the Chan realm or the site of the Way of intrinsic perfection and accomplishment. Afterwards, Chan Master Zhengjue further uses “The sunflower always turns to the sun, The willow catkins frequently fly with the wind” to distinctly indicate the marrow of the mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, and “the one flavor of the Chan Ocean of the wisdom-ocean of great ultimate enlightenment” to give Chan practitioners guidance in order to let them penetrate into the ultimate and complete mind world of inconceivability.



## 【SECOND INQUIRY】

### How to Truly Attain the Marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan ?

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In the chapter on Suddenness and Gradualness of *The Platform Sutra*, Sixth Patriarch Huineng, the founder of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, used the Dharma gate of the mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan to give Zhicheng (disciple of Shenxiu) guidance : “We should realize that the functions of all things manifest from the self-nature, and this is the true Dharma of discipline, samadhi and wisdom. Listen to my verse :

No impurity of the mind-ground is the discipline of the self-nature.

No ignorance of the mind-ground is the wisdom of the self-nature.

No disturbance of the mind-ground is the samadhi of the self-nature.

Neither increasing nor decreasing is vajra essence of the Mind;

Coming and going freely of the body are inherent functions of the Samadhi.

..... For those who ultimately realize no impurity, no ignorance and no disturbance in their self-nature, they are able to be purely aware of all dharmas/Dharma thought-after-thought with praja wisdom, and are always apart from all forms so as to be completely free and liberated. While the most profound “pure awareness” can be fully attainable in the ten directions and the three times, what is there to set up? Since both “the self-nature is ultimately self-realized” and “sudden ultimate-realization and sudden manifestation of spontaneous effortlessness” are approached instantaneously without any gradual process, so that there is no setting up all dharmas/Dharma. As all dharmas/Dharma are intrinsically in “perfect rest and cessation”, what gradation is there?”

After his ultimate and complete realization of “self-nature is able to manifest all things” and the rising of unconditional great-compassion, Sixth Patriarch Huineng directly pointed for Chan practitioners that the functions of all things manifest from the self-nature, and this is the genuine Dharma gate of the mind ground relevant to the non-duality of discipline, samadhi and wisdom. Therefore, the bodhi mind ground is free from impurity, ignorance and disturbance, and is intrinsically pure, so that the self-nature of true suchness is able to manifest all kinds of thoughts. If Chan practitioners can apply ultimate pure awareness of no thoughts and no abiding (or prajna wisdom of ultimate emptiness) for response thoughts after thoughts, they will be able to instantly penetrate into non-arising & manifestation and effortlessness & spontaneousness, and even ultimately and genuinely attain the marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan of ultimate no-attainment, as well as ultimately and suddenly realize the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye and the profound mind of nirvana of ultimate no-realization.

In the chapter on Samadhi and Wisdom of *The Platform Sutra*, the Sixth Patriarch Huineng further mentioned about that “the Dharma is of one kind, but the realization may be slow or swift; the Dharma has no suddenness or gradualness, but the practitioners may be sharp or dull.” as follows :

“Patriarch Huineng said to the assembly, ‘Fellow Chan practitioners ! The orthodox Chan Dharma originally is neither sudden nor gradual, it is practitioners' karmic roots that may be sharp or dull. The confused practitioner practices gradually, and the enlightened one realizes suddenly. As for having an insight into the true mind and seeing into the true nature, there is no difference. Therefore, the provisional terms suddenness and gradualness are set up.’”

Sixth Patriarch Huineng pointed out that there is only one Patriarch/Matriarch Chan Dharma (Buddhadharma), but Chan practitioners' realization has the difference of quickness and tardiness. Hence, the orthodox Chan Dharma is originally of no distinction of suddenness or gradualness, and the temporary names of suddenness and gradualness are set up due to Chan practitioners' difference in the sharpness and dullness of their karmic roots. Therefore, while those who are under confusion have to train themselves gradually, those who are awakened realize the reality in a sudden. As to the great matters of mind capacity regarding having an insight into the true mind and seeing into the self-nature, there is no difference at all. Hence we know, the key of Chan training, seeing into the self-nature and actualizing the Way lies in the sharpness and dullness of Chan practitioners' karmic roots, as well as the profundity and superficiality of their Chan investigation. In all history, with regard to the training and guidance to Chan practitioners, Chan Patriarchs/Matriarchs always first show the genuine investigation and true inquiry, then discern practitioners' potentiality and Chan investigation, and the last apply all kinds of wise strategy and dynamic device. Therefore, the so-called guiding principles of all Houses from the ancient to the modern is the principles of means or tactics to be used by all Patriarchs/Matriarchs for subjugating dragons and tigers, responding to the potentiality and receiving practitioners, as well as training Chan practitioners. Chan Master Linji Yixuan's discourse to the assembly in the informal Dharma talk is cited for reference :

“As for the Chan practitioners who come from all quarters, I myself divide them into three categories according to their inherent potentialities. If one of less-than-average potentiality comes, I snatch away his/her state without taking away his/her Dharma. If one of better-than-average potentiality comes, I snatch away both his/her state and Dharma. If one of superior potentiality comes, I snatch away neither his/her state nor Dharma. But should a practitioner of extraordinary realization come, I would manifest the whole functions and not place him/her in any category.”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Linji Huizhao)*

From the great essentials of receiving practitioners of Chan Master Linji, it is evident that the Chan Patriarchs/Matriarchs, with an eye on the forehead, can accurately discern the “oncoming wind” (the mind of the practitioners) by means of their keen and swift mind's eye. Aiming at Chan practitioner of less-than-average potentiality, they take the expedient device of “snatching away the state without taking away the person (or the Dharma);” directing at Chan practitioner of better-than-average potentiality, they introduce the function of “snatching away both the person (or Dharma) and state;” and pointing at Chan practitioner of superior potentiality, they adopt the strategy of “snatching away neither person (or Dharma) nor state,” for the purpose of cutting through the layered barriers and opening practitioners' eyes, and in order to make all Chan practitioners able to penetrate through all Chan barriers and to open their Dharma eye of the mind ground. Furthermore, if Chan practitioner of extraordinary realization comes

for investigating Chan, the Patriarchs/Matriarchs would manifest all functions to make him or her progress with upward one way of transcendence and instantly attain the inconceivable Treasury of the True Dharma Eye.

Chan Master Mazu Daoyi, the Dharma grand heir of Sixth Patriarch Huineng, had preached Chan Dharma extensively to receive Chan practitioners in Jiangxi Province. Thereupon, among all Chan practitioners swarmed from the four directions, there were one hundred thirty-nine people who were seeing into self-nature, eighty-four experienced complete enlightenment, three or four reached ultimate and complete enlightenment (attain Mazu's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye), and everyone individually became Chan Master in one quarter. Among all cases of great Master Ma's responding to the potentiality and receiving practitioners, the most representative one in "pure awareness of and appropriate response to the potentialities of the practitioners" is cited for reference :  
"A monk asked, 'Master, why do you say that mind is Buddha ?' Mazu replied, 'Just to stop the child from crying.' The monk asked, 'What would you say when the child stops crying ?' Mazu said, 'No mind, no Buddha.' The monk asked, 'How would you instruct if people of neither kind come ?' Mazu said, 'Tell him/her that it's not a thing.' The monk asked, 'What if suddenly an experienced insider comes ?' Mazu said, 'Ask him/her to experience the great Way.'"

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Mazu Daoyi)*

Chan practitioners of less-than-average potentiality always have deep and strong deluded thinking and attachments in their daily life, as if the children are frequently crying. When this kind of practitioners came, Master Mazu then snatched away their state without taking away their Dharma by means of "the mind is Buddha," in order to let them have an insight into the true mind and see into the self-nature through their diligent and genuine investigation. If Chan practitioners of better-than-average potentiality came, owing to their deluded thinking and attachments are a little shallow and weak just-suited to the children's cease of crying, Master Mazu immediately snatched away both their state and Dharma simultaneously by way of "no mind, no Buddha," and let them suddenly realize their true mind and see into their original nature. Provided that occasionally some Chan practitioners of superior potentiality came, who are exactly as those of "Traveling over rivers and oceans or wading through mountain streams, Seeking after Masters and inquiring about the Way to investigate Chan. Since I realize the Way of Caoxi, I actualize all those do not relate to the great emancipation of transmigration," Master Mazu directly pointed out that "it's not a thing" for snatching away neither state nor Dharma, and guided them to instantly put all their illusory attachments at rest and suddenly realize "no attainment." Moreover, in the event of unexpectedly coming across a Chan practitioner of extraordinary realization, Master Mazu would not place him/her in any category of potentiality, and make him/her actualize the patient rest in non-arising (the great Way) as well as suddenly penetrate into the marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan.

Among all awakened disciples of Master Mazu Daoyi, those Chan Masters whose Chan investigation and response to the functions have intimate relationship with "Mind is

Buddha,” “No mind, no Buddha,” and “It's not a thing,” are no other than Damei Fachang (752-839) and Nanquan Puyuan. The related cases are cited for reference :

(1) Chan Master Damei Fachang

Chan Master Damei Fachang came from Xiangyang. His lay surname was Zheng. As a youth he was reported to have left home to live at Yuquan Monastery in ancient Xingzhou. Upon first meeting the great Master Mazu, Damei asked him, “What is Buddha ?” Mazu said, “Mind is Buddha.” Upon hearing these words, Damei experienced great enlightenment. He soon moved to Mt. Da Mei (Big Plum). When Mazu heard that Damei lived on the mountain, he sent a monk to call upon him and ask the question, “When you met Master Mazu, what did you attain that caused you to come live on this mountain ?” Damei said, “Master Ma told me that ‘Mind is Buddha.’ Then I came here to live.” The monk said, “These days Master Ma's Chan Dharma has changed.” Damei said, “What is it ?” The monk said, “Recently he says, ‘No mind, no Buddha.’” Damei said, “That old fellow just keeps on confusing people. Let him go ahead and say, ‘No mind, no Buddha.’ As for me, I still say ‘Mind is Buddha.’” The monk returned and reported this to Master Mazu. Mazu said, “The plum is ripe.”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 7)*

Chan Master Damei Fachang traveled to investigate Chan under great Master Mazu Daoyi, and reached great awakening at the very moment upon hearing “Mind is Buddha.” From this moment on he lived on the mountain to expound the Chan Dharma. Provided that Damei steadfastly attached to what he heard about “Mind is Buddha,” then he was unable to take into account for enlightenment. Therefore, he responded to the further test Mazu rendered to him with ordinary mind of ultimate non-attainment. The so-called “ordinary mind” of ultimate non-attainment is as follows : His realization at that time was exactly like this, that is to say, at the maturity of the conditions of capacity, he just heard the words “Mind is Buddha” and suddenly put all deluded thoughts to full rest so as to realize non-attainment. As for great Master Ma's further strategy of “No mind, no Buddha,” it was the skillful means in pure awareness of and appropriate response to the potentialities of the practitioners, and it had nothing to do with him. Furthermore, Damei's so-called “this old fellow just confuses people” actually has the following meaning : The wise strategy and dynamic device of this old monk appeared again and again. He told this Chan practitioner of sharp potentiality in this way, and said to that of good capacity in that way, therefore, they would indeed be confused and disturbed by him except the one with sharpness in karmic root. Moreover, no matter how he put it, those with dull karmic-root would still really be confused about. However, great Master Ma was genuinely not ashamed to be “the colt that tramples people all over the world to death,” merely used those two sentences to turn heaven and earth, and helped two kinds of Chan practitioners to dissolve the sticking points, untie the bonds, as well as suddenly liberate from the shackles that bind them. In fact, Chan Master Damei penetrated into the realm of Chan enlightenment by means of punctuation and restoration of “Mind is Buddha.” And “No mind, no Buddha” might actually guide other Chan practitioners, who were already up to required standard, to see into their self-nature or reach complete enlightenment.

(2) Chan Master Nanquan Puyuan

Once Chan Master Nanquan said, “Master Mazu of Jiangxi said, ‘Mind is Buddha.’ But Old Teacher Wang doesn’t talk that way. It’s no Mind, it’s no Buddha, and it’s not a thing. Is there any error in speaking thus ?” Zhaozhou then bowed and went out. At that time, a monk asked Zhaozhou, “Venerable ! Why did you bow and then go out ?” Zhaozhou said, “Please go and ask the Old Monk.” The monk went into the hall and asked, “What’s the matter with venerable Zhaozhou just now ?” Nanquan said, “He just realized my essential principle.”

*(The Record of Transmission of the Lamp; Volume 8)*

Sometime in his discourse to all disciples, Chan Master Nanquan Puyuan, who had genuinely attained Master Mazu’s “Treasury of the True Dharma Eye,” mentioned that Mazu’s adept at applying “Mind is Buddha” for receiving potential practitioners is merely a measure of expediency for a while, which all that belongs to the subtle ways used to stop the child from crying just like a hollow fist or a yellow leaf. In Tang dynasty, to begin from “two gates of non-arising” (Mazu Daoyi and Shitou Xiqian) in Jiangxi and Huinan, Chan style had become prosperous and flourishing, and sectarian practitioners had uncommon potential for the Chan Dharma, therefore, Patriarchs or Matriarchs always manifested the great function of the whole potential to receive practitioners in order to let them penetrate through the prison barrier at the very moment. Hence, Chan Master Nanquan simply used living devices and opportunely presented “It’s no Mind, it’s no Buddha, and it’s not a thing” to bring Zhaozhou Congshen about direct penetration into the profound principle of the Patriarch/Matriarch. Furthermore, Nanquan had said, “The great Way has no form, the true reality has no duality, and both do not pertain to seeing, hearing and awareness.” In fact, the great Way has no form so that it responds to all conditions with non-abiding, and the great Way can manifest all things in order that it reveals the whole functions in accordance with all potentialities. The only one causes and conditions of the great matter for Chan Patriarchs and all Chan practitioners lies in how to reveal, manifest, realize and penetrate into this great Way.

The marrow of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, the profound principle of Patriarch/Matriarch Path, and one-thought reality of Dharma Realm is of original completion and accomplishment, is of intrinsic sufficiency, as well as is without cultivation of the Way and Sitting Chan. Chan practitioners merely have to fulfill the ordinary life and respond to daily activities with ordinary mind, so that they are able to suddenly put their deluded mind to full rest and reach complete enlightenment. It even extremely surpasses for them to put to rest all deluded mind forever in one thought, and arrive directly at the sudden realization of the ultimate non-arising and ultimate effortlessness of the ordinary mind. That is to say, they are directly compatible with the Chan Realm of non-arising and no non-arising as well as effortlessness and no effortlessness thought after thought, and directly actualize the Way of no-abiding bodhi of perfection, brightness and everlasting silent-illumination thought after thought, or directly penetrate into the Dharma Realm of the One Reality in which the ultimate true-emptiness and ultimate subtle-existence are in perfect harmony.

Therefore, Guohan often uses “the mind of pure awareness of self-nature” (Mind is Buddha) to guide Chan practitioners of less-than-average potentiality for the purpose of

snatching away their state without taking away their Dharma, and clearly points out that if Chan practitioners are able to maintain the ordinary mind of ultimate pure awareness at every moment, then all their experiences of ordinary life are the marrow of Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan, the principle of Patriarch/Matriarch Way, and also the reality of Dharma Realm. If Chan practitioners of better-than-average potentiality come for Chan investigation, then Guohan guides them with “no mind of pure awareness of self-nature” (No mind, no Buddha) in order to snatch away both their state and Dharma, and to make them naturally and directly penetrate into the Chan Realm of non-duality in silence and illumination, together with letting them manifest inexhaustible functions of their own treasury in accordance with all conditions and in harmony with all phenomena. Supposing there is occasionally Chan practitioner of superior potentiality to come for inquiring Chan, Guohan immediately and directly points at “It’s ultimately not a thing” for snatching away neither his/her state nor his/her Dharma, so as to help him/her to let go of all conditions, put all deluded mind to rest forever, and go straight in the ultimate and complete realm of non-arising, which is of no mind, effortlessness, spontaneousness and freedom. Provided that a practitioner of extraordinary realization unexpectedly comes, Guohan would manifest the whole functions to directly make him/her actualize “the Dharma Realm of One Reality is in ultimate perfect harmony” (the great Way), and straightly let him/her profoundly penetrate into the marrow of the mind ground of Patriarch/Matriarch Chan.

In his discourse records, Chan Master Hongzhi Zhengjue of Caodong school preached to the Chan practitioners as follows :

“The pure and profoundly bright mind-field is originally possessed by all of you. .... While straightforwardly put down the self-centeredness, you are able to simultaneously take on altruistic and compassionate activities. Having turned yourself around and reach the rank of no level, you are able to make use of the Buddha Path and set your feet on it. The bodhi self-nature manifests all subtle functions, and the touched situation itself is the true reality. There is all the more not a fine strand of hair or a single atom of dust outside yourself.”

*(The Discourse Records of Chan Master Hongzhi; Volume 6)*

Chan Master Hongzhi directly pointed at the Chan Marrow of Patriarchs/Matriarchs, and directly proclaimed that since all sentient beings perfectly possess the pure and profoundly bright mind ground, they only have to directly let go of all deluded thinking and attachment so that they are able to be free from and be of non-duality of taking on and putting down, and to shoulder such responsibility as the family heritage of the Buddhas of preaching Dharma for the benefits of sentient beings and letting Chan Dharma live for long. That is to say, in their Surangama great samadhi of “one thought for ten thousand years,” they thus liberate countless beings, but exactly not a single being is liberated. Meanwhile, by way of turning themselves around, they can suddenly reach the rank of no level and instantly ascend the path of no path, together with applying great function of wisdom and endless vow of compassion for “performing constantly the deliverance by Chan Dharma which is like a flower in the sky, establishing everywhere the Site of the Way which is like a moon in the water; illuminating frequently the needs of sentient beings which are like the images in a mirror, accomplishing everywhere the pure lands which are like the reflections in a bubble.”

Chan Master Dahui Zonggao also preached to Zhenru Daoren in his discourse records as follows :

“Since you can turn yourself around, you are able to turn the world around yourself. Since you can turn the world around, you are just then called the person of actualizing ultimate reality. Since you have actualized the ultimate reality, you are exactly enlightened to this Mind. And since you have enlightened to the Mind, you minutely experiment the enlightened mind and realize that originally there is no realization. Then among the non-realization, you can take on the functions and actions, sometimes pick a blade of grass up to serve as a sixty-foot golden statue, and sometimes take a sixty-foot golden statue as a blade of grass. All these sorts of changes, including accomplishing or destroying all dharmas which seem all in confusion, are not in excess of this Mind of non-realization. Right at this moment, it is neither Tathagata Chan, nor Patriarch (or Matriarch) Chan, nor Chan of the Nature of Mind, nor Silent Illumination Chan, nor Chan of Tapping and Shouting, nor Chan of Perfect Resting and Cessation, nor Excessive Chan, nor Chan of Special Transmission Outside All Teachings, nor Chan of Five Houses, and nor Fabrication Chan of Old Man Miaoxi. Since it does not belong to the above-mentioned Chan, then what is it ultimately ? Until here don't say that nobody is unable to realize it, also Old Man Miaoxi himself cannot realize it. Venerable Zhenru Daoren ! Please see into it by yourself.”

In his article of “*The Guidance to Zheru Daoren*,” Chan Master Dahui had also directly pointed at the Principle of the Patriarch/Matriarch Way, and straightly proclaimed that Chan practitioners merely have to directly turn themselves around, at the very moment it is the native home of self-nature. Once they are able to turn around, then they can turn the states with the pure mind of self-nature. And since they can turn the states with the Mind, they are just then the Chan practitioners of realizing the ultimate reality of all dharmas. Supposing they are able to penetrate into the ultimate reality, then they can ultimately enlighten to the ordinary mind of ultimate pure awareness of self-nature, but it is indeed of no realization. Nevertheless, in their ultimate non-realization, they can manifest inexhaustible great functions of wisdom and great actions of compassion in order to occasionally use a blade of grass as a sixty-foot golden statue and vice versa. Therefore, right at this moment, the Chan Realm of non-interference among all phenomena for Chan practitioners of great freedom is neither called Tathagata Chan, nor Patriarch/Matriarch Chan, nor Chan of the Nature of Mind; also is neither called Silent Illumination Chan, nor Chan of Tapping and Shouting, nor Chan of Perfect Resting and Cessation, nor Excessive Chan; even is neither called Chan of Special Transmission Outside All Teachings, nor Chan of Five Houses, and nor Fabrication Chan of Miaoxi. Since there is not a single dharma to set up, then what is it ultimately ? In fact, even Chan Master Dahui also did not realize it. Chan practitioner with an eye on the forehead, who has ultimately seen into the self-nature, please say something !

