



# *Fresh Breeze Koans*

June 2009

A monk asked, “Where is the mind’s abiding place?”

“The mind,” responded the teacher, “abides where there is no abiding.”

“What is meant by ‘no abiding’?”

“When the mind is not abiding in any particular object, we say that it abides where there is no abiding.”

“What is meant by not abiding in any particular object?”

“It means not to be abiding in the dualism of good and evil, being and non-being, thought and matter; it means not to be abiding in emptiness or in non-emptiness, neither in tranquility nor in non-tranquility. Where there is no abiding place, that is truly the mind’s abiding place.”



Abiding nowhere, let the mind come forth



Outside the Zen Hall of Naewonsa  
The snow-covered world  
Is the robe of Avalokiteshvara<sup>1</sup>  
Expounding, like flowing water,  
The Dharma inexpressible by the body,  
Inaudible to the body,  
Invisible to the body,  
Inexpressible by, and inaudible and invisible  
to space.  
So who is this wonderful person  
Who expresses, hears and sees it?

~ Song’yong Sunim (20<sup>th</sup> century Korean nun)

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<sup>1</sup> Avalokiteshvara is the Bodhisattva of Compassion, called Guanyin in Chinese

### *Zhaozhou's Yes & No*

A monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does a dog have Buddha nature or not?"

"Yes," replied Zhaozhou.

"Then why did it jump into that bag of fur?"

"Because it knew what it was doing and that's why it transgressed."

Another time a monk asked Zhaozhou, "Does a dog have Buddha nature or not?"

"No."

"All beings have buddha nature. Why doesn't a dog have it?"

"Because it's beginning to awaken in the world of ignorance."<sup>2</sup>

*Book of Serenity* 18



### *The story behind Fayán's fresh breeze*

One day, the Chan teacher Baiyun came into the milling shed where Fayán worked and asked him, "Some monks were visiting here from Mount Lu. They had all experienced enlightenment. When I asked them to express their understanding, they did it very well, with words of substance. When I questioned them about episodes involving Chan teachers of the past, they were able to explain them. When I asked them for comments on Chan sayings, their comments were perfectly acceptable. In spite of all that, they still weren't there yet."

Baiyun's words brought deep doubts to Fayán's mind. "Why did he say they were missing something?" After struggling with this for several days, he suddenly broke through. Everything that had seemed so precious to him had fallen away as he raced to Baiyun's quarters. When Baiyun saw him, he got up and began dancing about for him, waving his arms and stamping his feet. Fayán just watched him, laughing.

Later, Fayán said, "I broke into great beads of sweat ... Then suddenly I experienced for myself the fresh breeze that rises up when you lay down the great burden."

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<sup>2</sup> Literally "Because it has activity-consciousness," meaning that through the agency of ignorance an unenlightened mind begins to be disturbed, or awakened