



*Summer Solstice Koans*

*June 2008*

Linji said, “Buddha is not the object of our search; do not make the Buddha your ideal aim. Do not make Buddha into a reality outside yourself. The image we have in our head of the Buddha is not the Buddha. Such a Buddha is a shadow, a ghost, called Ghost Buddha who can suck up your soul. That is why when we meet Ghost Buddha, we should cut off Ghost Buddha’s head.”



“When my mind doesn’t arise, everything is blameless.”



*When he was about twenty-five, Yunmen went on pilgrimage to see Muzhou, a well-known recluse with a fierce manner. Years earlier Muzhou had left the monastery to take care of his aged mother, whom he supported by making sandals.*

Master Muzhou’s one-room hermitage was usually closed. When he did occasionally receive visitors, he got straight to the point. When Yunmen could freely roll in and out,<sup>1</sup> he went straight to Muzhou’s door and knocked.

Muzhou asked, “Who’s there?”

Yunmen replied, “It’s me, [Yunmen] Wenyan.”

Muzhou blocked the entrance and asked, “Why do you keep coming?”

Yunmen replied, “I am not clear about myself.”

Muzhou said, “Utterly useless stuff!”<sup>2</sup> pushed Yunmen out, and shut the door. In this way Yunmen attained understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> A Chan expression for an accomplished practitioner, one who can demonstrate the unity of all phenomena in one (rolling in), and the manifestation of the one in all phenomena (rolling out)

<sup>2</sup> Literally, “stone drills from the Qin era”, gigantic drills intended for the construction of the ancient Qin emperor’s huge palace; this grandiose project was never realized, so the drills stood for something completely useless