Rinzai's Four Categories

Take Away the Subject
Don't Take Away the Object

Po-chang, Wei-shan, names not yet still;
Wild fox body and water buffalo bull.
No monks dwell in the former dynasty's old temples;
Yellow leaves and autumn wind share the pavilion.

Rinzai's comment: "The sun gives birth to a brocade of flowers spread over the earth; On the child hangs hair as white as silk thread."

Po-chang Huai-hai 百丈懷海 (Hyakujō Ekai, 720-814) studied Zen with Ma-tsu Tao-i (Baso Dōitsu, d. 788). His fame rests with drawing up a set of rules for the organization of Zen communities, the most basic rule being "a day of no work is a day of no eating."

Wei-shan Ling-yu 涼山靈祐 (Isan Reiyū, d. 813) was a student of Po-chang and co-founder of the Wei-yang sect of Zen in China.

Wild fox body: An allusion to the following story about Po-chang.

There was an old man who listened everyday to Po-chang expounding the Dharma and afterwards left with the crowd. One day he stayed behind. Po-chang asked him who he was. The old man replied saying, "Once upon a time there was a teacher named Mister So-and-so living on this mountain. A student of his asked him, 'Can a man of great training fall into the chain of karma?' The teacher said, 'No, he does not fall into the chains of karma.' Then, after the teacher died, he was reincarnated five hundred times as a fox. Now, I ask you for the sake of that teacher, say the word of enlightenment that he may be liberated from his fox body." Po-chang said, "The man of great training does not ignore karma." At this, the old man was immediately enlightened and revered Po-chang."
Water buffalo refers to a kōan of Wei-shan's in which he confronts his students with the problem:

Suppose, a hundred years after I die, a water buffalo comes to the parochial houses with an inscription on his left flank reading Monk Wei-shan. Then if you say, "This is Wei-shan," it is still a water buffalo; if you say, "I is a water buffalo," then it is still Monk Wei-shan. If you say, "What kind of a thing is this?," then you understand.

The first category denotes a state in which the object is affirmed and the subject is negated, that is the substance or reality of the object is affirmed as opposed to the non-substance and unreality of the subject. The subject is the "I" or ego-self, while the object is the world at large, the objective universe. Thus, in Rinzai's comment, the field brocaded with flowers represents the objective world or nature which with its endless cycles is full of substance and reality while the image of the child with white hair denotes the "I," the ego-self which dies and has no real substance. The surrealistic quality of the image, a grey-haired child, emphasizes the unreality of the subject. In Ikkyū's poem, Po-chang and Wei-shan represent two "I"s who have certainly passed away, and it is certain that no monks are dwelling in the temples where they used to live. There are only yellow leaves and autumn wind, Ikkyū's images for the objective world of nature and complements to Rinzai's spring field of flowers.
奪境不奪人
臨濟見孫誰的伝
宗風滅却驅辺
芒鞋竹杖風流友
曲榛木床名利禅

datsu-kyō fudatsu nin
rinzai no jison tare ka tekiden
shūfū mekkyaku su katsuro hen
bōai chikujō fūryū no tomo
kyokuroku bokujo myōri no zen
Take Away the Object, Don't
Take Away the Subject

Who among Rinzai's descendants received the true transmission?

"My teaching will be lost in the hands of a blind donkey!"

Straw sandals, bamboo walking stick, I will be a friend of the ancient ways;

Ornamented chairs, wooden floors, you can have your Zen of fame and profit.

Rinzai's comment: "The king's commands already carried out over the whole country, Outside the army's frontier posts, there is no smoke or dust."

"My teaching..." is a quote from the Rinzai roku. At the time of this remark, Rinzai was sick and close to death. He had called his favorite disciple and asked him what he would say, after Rinzai was dead, to someone who came and asked, "What is Rinzai's teaching?" The disciple shouted, whereupon Rinzai said, "You see my teaching will be lost in the hands of a blind donkey."

This is one of the paradoxes of Rinzai Zen, for according to tradition, Rinzai's Zen was transmitted to that pupil, yet the story seems to indicate otherwise.

Ornamented chairs, wooden floors appears frequently in Ikkyū's poetry as a metaphor for the Zen of fame and profit, that is, false Zen. Ornamented chairs refers to the pomp and ostentation of high-ranking monks. Wooden floors were apparently considered luxurious as compared to austere stone floors.

Fame and profit is a classic expression which denotes desire after personal aggrandizement and wealth. The word "profit" has had a decidedly pejorative connotation ever since Mencius in the opening passage of his book so soundly berated the King of Wei for even mentioning it. It certainly has that sense here.
The second category affirms the subject and negates the object; in this state of consciousness, the subject seems real and the objective universe unreal. It is the position of absolute idealism, the view "that the entire world is merely a reflection of one's own consciousness."\(^9\)

Demieville, explaining Rinzai's comment, says that "the suppression of the exterior world in the state of introverted meditation procures a peace similar to that of a world where the orders of the king are obeyed to the frontiers and the generals at the border are troubled neither by the smoke of signal torches by night nor the dust of armies on the march by day."\(^10\) The subject, like the king in control of his realm, is in control of his perceptions of the exterior world.

Ikkyū, in his poem about this category takes the opportunity to brandish his own "self" or "subject" by asserting, as he does so often, that with his simple habits he had inherited the true transmission while other monks, bewitched by the fame and gain of the objective world, are on their way to perdition.
 novembre qui

三千年来

人言

前生大德

相自赞持经

一番不知禅
人境俱奪

雉醫亀焦身迣遭
井汾絕信話頭丹
夜來滅却詩人興
桂折秋風白露前

ninkyō gudatsu
chiei kishō mi chunten
heifun shin o zetsu-shite watō madokanari
yarai mekkyakusu shijin no kyō
kei wa oru shūfū hakuro no mae
Take Away Both Subject and Object

The pheasant takes cover, the tortoise is scorched, one is obstructed.

Pin and Fen are cut off from news, the kōan is complete.

Night comes and the poet's inspiration dies away.

Before white frost, the cinnamon tree lies broken, autumn wind.

Rinzai's comment: "Pin and Fen are cut off from news. They are isolated, each in its corner."

The pheasant takes cover refers to a story about a forest fire in which a pheasant plays a heroic but desperate part. It is a metaphor for a distressing situation.

The tortoise is scorched refers to the ancient custom of obtaining oracles by putting a hot iron to a tortoise shell and then interpreting the cracks thereby produced.

Pin and Fen are cut off from news is a direct quote from Rinzai's comment (supra). A commentary to the Rinzai roku says that Pin and Fen were two provinces of T'ang who revolted against the dynasty.

The third category presents the situation where both subject and object are negated. In the language of the Lankāvatāra Sūtra, this state is known as pudgaladharmanairātmya (here hō 法 has the same meaning as kyō 境) "the egolessness of both the individual soul and external objects." In other words, there is "no self-substance in anything." This is regarded as a state of true enlightenment because duality is finally transcended and all things are realized to be void. This is the point of view which has popularly gained Buddhism a reputation for nihilism even though the negative statement of the non-dual truth of universe presupposes that the opposite positive statement is also true.
Rinzai's comment to this category, according to Demiéville, means that in this state of consciousness, a man is isolated, cut off from all sense of self or other, like the far provinces of Pin and Fen who during revolts were cut off from the rest of the world. 

Ikkyū dwells on the negativism inherent in this category. Images of distress and obstruction set a gloomy tone. One feels isolated like Pin and Fen; the kōan is complete; there are no more doubts, no more fertile ground for the poet's inspiration. Autumn brings destruction and cold. All this seems to indicate that Ikkyū associated this kind of consciousness with a profound pessimism.
人境俱不奪
莫道再來錢半文
壇坊酒肆有功勳
祇緣人囑相如渴
腸斷琴白日暮雲

ninkyo gufudatsu
iu-nakare sairai sen hanmon to
inbō shushi ni kōkun ari
tada hito no sōjo ga katsu o wasu ni yotte
chōdan su kindai nippo no kumo
Take Away Neither Subject Nor Object

Don't say I can't come again with so little money!
There is merit in brothels and sake shops.
That's why people talk of Hsiang-ju's thirst;
Breathtaking music from the koto, clouds at sunset.

Rinzai's comment: "The king ascends to his jeweled palace; In the fields the old men sing."

Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju: A famous character of the Han dynasty. He was a man of high rank and served as an official from time to time, but due to a fondness for reading books and drinking wine, he never kept a position for long and so was always poor. One day he fell in love with a lord's daughter named Wen-chun  文君 . He won her love by playing to her night after night on his koto, hence the reference to the koto in the fourth line. Because he was too poor to support his newly-won bride, he sold his carriage, one of his few remaining possessions and bought a wine shop. The wine shop was a financial success and, content with his wife and his koto, Hsiang-ju never wanted for wine again.

The fourth category presents the positive expression of the non-dual truth; subject and object are both affirmed as real. As mentioned before, the negative expression presupposes that the positive expression is also true. When duality is transcended, unreal and real are the same. This is the final goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Chinese accorded this "return" to normal worldly activities a special importance. Rinzai's comment implies that everything is as should be; the king in his palace and the old man singing in the fields are images of normality. Ikkyū's poem is as optimistic as the previous one was pessimistic. The allusion to the happy story of Hsiang-ju sets the tone. Ikkyū emphasizes that from this enlightened point of view, there is merit in brothels and sake shops too. In this state of consciousness, the events of ordinary reality take on a sublime aspect.
賛虚堂和尚
育王住院世皆乖
放下法衣如破鞋
臨濟正伝無一點
一天風月満吟懷

kidō oshō o san su
ikuō no jūin yo mina somuku
hōe o hōge shite haai no gotoshi
rinzai no shōden itten nashi
itten no fūgetsu gin-kai ni mitsu
Praising Monk Hsu-t'ang

The world turned its back on the master of Yu-wang.

He could abandon his habit as though it were a broken sandal,

For Rinzai's correct transmission, not a single care,

Not a cloud in the sky, wind, moon, a heart full of song.

Monk Hsu-t'ang Chih-yu (Kidō Chigu, 1184-1269) was a prelate of some consequence, but he was noted for being a wanderer. His departing poem was

Eighty-five years
Knowing nothing even about the Patriarchs,
Rowing with my elbow, serving, going
Erasing my tracks in the Great Void.17

Yu-wang: One of many mountain temples where Hsu-t'ang served after 1258.18

Ikkyū often found encouragement in studying the teachings of the great T'ang and Sung masters. He felt particularly close to Hsu-t'ang and mentioned him in his death poem (see Chapter V). In this poem, Ikkyū praises him for being despised by others and for being detached from his status as a monk. Hsu-t'ang was not concerned with the fine points of the correct transmission of Rinzai, something which was probably debated at great length in the temples which Ikkyū frequented. Ikkyū finishes by suggesting that Hsu-t'ang's mind was as free of points of dogma as the sky was clear of clouds.
如何是臨濟下事
五祖演曰五逆聞雷
機先一唱鐵碑崩
五逆元來在衲僧
桃李春風清宴夕
半醒半醉酒如絆

ika naru ka kore rinzaï ka no ji,
goso en iwaku "gogyaku rai o kiku" to.
kisen no ikkatsu tetsuchi kuzuru
gogyaku ganrai nōsō ni ari
tōri shunpū seien no yūbe
hansēi hansui shu jō no gotoshi
What is it Like, the Rinzai Sect? The Fifth Patriarch Lecturing Said, "The Five Sins, And One Hears Thunder."

Just at the threshold, one shout and the iron cage crumbles.
The five sins are in monks since the beginning.
Peach and plum, spring wind, a beautiful feast at evening;
Half sober, half drunk, sake is like a rope.

The Fifth Patriarch: Hung-jen (Gunin, 601-674).
The five sins are said to send one to hell. In order of ascending seriousness, they are killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an arhat, drawing blood from a buddha, and causing dissen­sion within the order. Here, however, the five sins are to be taken merely as a metaphor for man's propensity to do evil.

To hear thunder is to be shocked into an awareness of the nature of sin. Rinzai was famous for shouting at the right time to push his students to sudden enlightenment. At the breaking point, all distinctions between good and evil, sin and virtue, are dispelled, and the iron cage that such dualistic thinking produces collapses. All monks are chained by the notion of sin. Above all, the special characteristic of Rinzai's Zen is complete liberation, yet paradoxically, enlightenment is not the end of desire. Although Ikkyō is enlightened, sake still makes him drunk.
いかなるかそれ'unmon shū,
en iwaku "kōki senjakusu" to.  

kaki kaze atataka ni shite shundai ni ugoku  
hachijō yo in shi seki hiraku  
ichiji kan, sankutai  
i Kubaku hito ka ganrī ni kōai o tsuku
What is it Like, YÜn-men's Sect? He Lecturing
   Said, “The Red Flag Sparkles and Flashes.”
A fine flag moves in the warm wind above the
   spring dais,
Eighty people or more, the master begins his
   lecture.
One word barrier, three phrase body of knowl-
   edge.
How many people have red specks in their eyes?

YÜn-men Wen-yen (Unmon Bunen, d. 949) was a monk of
   the late T'ang dynasty and a disciple of Hsüeh-feng I-ts'ün
   (Seppō Gizon). Hsüeh-feng broke YÜn-men's leg by
   closing a door on it, and the resulting pain enlightened him.20
   YÜn-men's sect was never brought to Japan.

The red flag sparkles and flashes: One of YÜn-men's kōan about
   the nature of enlightenment.21

One word barrier refers to this story about YÜn-men:

   At the end of the summer, Ts'ui-yen said to a
   gathering, "For one summer now I have been ex-
  plaining the dharma to you students. Look, do
   I still have eyebrows?" [People who falsify
   the dharma are supposed to get leprosy, one of
   the first signs of which is the loss of eye-
   brows.] Pao-fu said, "Robbers have false
   hearts." Ch'ang-ch'ing said, "Your eyebrows
   are growing." YÜn-men said, "Kuan 'barrier'!"22

Three phrase body of knowledge refers to the three famous kōan of
YÜn-men's: first, kangai kenkon 風蓋乾坤 box and lid, heaven
   and earth; second, setsudan shūryū 斬斷衆流 cutting off, every-
   thing flows; and third, suiha chikuro 隨波逐浪 following waves, chas-
   ing waves. A clear explanation of these kōan is extremely dif-
   ficult. I have decided to accept Dumoulin's interpretation of the
   commentary on these three kōan by Yüan-wu K'o-ch'in 圓悟克勤
   (Engo Kokugon). Accordingly, the first kōan means that "true
reality, true emptiness is the marvelous existence in each perception and each cognition, completely evident and unequivocal." The second kōan means that "true reality defies understanding or expression in words; when all appearances suddenly come to a rest, the passions are destroyed." The third kōan means that "the knowledge of reality gained through outside objects is said to be like the characterizing and knowing of the earth from its germs or a man from his words."23

Many of Ikkyū's poems seem to be composed like collages; the lines are not connected in any logical or rational manner. One line simply evokes the next by complement, contrast, or random association. This is such a poem. The title "What is it like, Yūn-men's sect?" unifies the poem, while the content is made up of bits and pieces of what Ikkyū knows about Yūn-men. The red flag calls to Ikkyū's mind a spring meeting of monks under banners and Yūn-men trying to enlighten them with his characteristically laconic teaching. In the last line, however, Ikkyū intimates that too many monks received Yūn-men's teaching but remained unenlightened.
いかなるかここに依詠し、
en iwaku "danbi koro ni yokotau" to.

えじゃく wa shaka reiyū wa ushi
himō sabutsu mata furyū
kohi michi tayu chōkei no kaku
bansei no seimei kōyō no aki
Hui-ch'i became a monk, Ling-yu became a cow;
A buddha covered with hair, how delightful.
An old stone marker, the road stops, man of the long valley.
10,000 generations of names, autumn's yellow leaves.

Wei-yang sect: One of the Five Houses of the southern branch of Zen in T'ang China. Co-founded by Wei-shan Ling-yu (supra) and Yang-shan Hui-ch'i 仰山慧寂 (Ryōzan Ejaku, 814-890) between 806 and 880. The sect merged with the Rinzai sect.

Hui-ch'i: At the age of fifteen, he wanted to become a monk, but his parents opposed his plan until, two years later, when Hui-ch'i cut off two fingers to show his determination to become a monk.

Ling-yu: Wei-shan's personal name.

Man of the long valley: In the Tsu-t'ing shih-yuan 祖庭事苑, Wei-shan is described as having been "born in the long valley of Fu-chou."

The Wei-yang sect was already long extinct by Ikkyū's time, and "old stone marker" bemoans this fact. In the last line, Ikkyū conjures up autumn leaves to point to the relentless passing away of generations, the classic Buddhist theme of impermanence.
いかなるかしるほげんしゅ、
えんわけ "じゅんにんよおおかす" と

じゅんにんつうげん、じゅんにんふくはし
じゅんにんにょうゆうよちんちん
せいざんめんもくかおかゆのうごく
かしゅおほしんのおまなぶがごとし
What is it Like, This Fa-yen Sect? He Lecturing
Said, "The Watchman Breaks into the Night."

One drop at the source of the Ts'ao, one drop
deep.

The watchman raises a row but the night is
silent.

Green mountains fill everyone's eyes, what kind
of law is this?

It is like the ugly woman studying the beauty's
frown.

Fa-yen sect: Founded in late T'ang by Fa-yen Wen-i (Hōgen Buneki, 885-958) who brought Zen closer to a form of sutra
Buddhism, i.e. Buddhism based on written doctrine, than any other
T'ang Zen master.27

One drop at the source of the Ts'ao: A quotation from this story
in the Shih shih t'ung-chien 释氏通鑑:

Shao-kuo asked Fa-yen, "What is it like, one
drop of water from the Ts'ao river?" Fa-yen
said, "It is one drop of water from the Ts'ao
river." Shao-kuo was immediately enlightened.28

The meaning of Fa-yen's words is similar to Blake's "To see
the world in a grain of sand" or to the passage from the Lankāva-
tāra Sūtra which says that knowing one dharma is to know the
10,000 dharmas, i.e. that by thoroughly penetrating one thing,
one can understand all things.

Another interpretation of this phrase is found in the Ch'uan
teng lu 傳燈錄: "In 502, a monk named Chih-yao sailed to Yin-
chou and the waters of the Ts'ao river. He had heard of the excel-
lent taste of this water and that at the upper reaches of this
river there was good land. Accordingly, he built a temple there
and called it Pao-lin. Many years later, the Sixth Patriarch Hui-
neng 慧能 (Enō, 638-713) taught there. Thus, water from the
Ts'ao river is also a metaphor for the Zen teachings of the Sixth
Patriarch."29
The watchman represents the unenlightened person. The second line contrasts the noisy watchman to the silent night which would appear so to the watchman if only he could keep quiet for a moment. One is reminded of Te-shan Hsuan-chien 德山宣鑑 (Tokusan Senkan, 780-865) who attained sudden enlightenment when his master blew out a candle and he experienced the deepness of the night. 30

Ugly woman: A reference to a story about an ugly woman who copied the frown of a famous beauty only to make herself more ugly. Ik-kyū implies that Fa-yen mimicked true Zen but only made himself more ridiculous.
挑起大燈輝一天
競興競賽法堂前
風浪水宿無人記
第五橋辺二十年

daitō kokushi gyōjō no sue ni daisu
daitō o kakage okoshite itten ni kagayaku
ranyo homare o kisou hōdō no mae
fūsan suishuku hito no kisuru nashi
daigo kyōhen nijū-nen
On the Topic of Daitō Kokushi's Conduct

Raise high the Great Lamp, let it light the whole sky,
The phoenix carriages compete in praise before the Dharma Hall.
Wind-eating, water-dwelling, no one records that;
Twenty years he spent around Gojō Bridge.

Daitō Myōchō Kokushi �煥妙超國師 was the founder of Daitokuji.
The Great Lamp is the literal translation of Daitō's name.
Phoenix carriages means "important" people.
Wind-eating, water-dwelling is a conventional phrase for describing the life of a beggar.31

Gojō Bridge spans the Kamo river in Kyoto. Daitō lived in a temple close by named Unkoji and begged at the bridge.

People often forget the time that many famous people spent in obscurity. In Ikkyū's time, Daitokuji was a large and wealthy temple, the celebrations for its founder were lavish and attracted many of the powerful people in the country. However, few of these people bothered to remember that Daitō's greatness was partly due to spending twenty years begging along with the lowest and most wretched of humanity around Gojō bridge.
Prose introduction to four poems on the nature of karma:

"Good and evil have never been confused. In this world, those who do good are all friends of Shun and those who do evil are all friends of Chieh. The pheasant is always attacked by the hawk, the rat is always bitten by the cat, this is innate in them and predetermined. The way in which all living beings take refuge in Buddha's virtue is also like this. Therefore, I have made poems and instructed a gathering with them."

Shun was one of a triumvirate of model rulers in China. Chieh, the last ruler of the Hsia Dynasty, was as infamous for evil as Shun was famous for good.

In this prose passage and the following four poems, Ikkyū reflects on the nature of karma, the Buddhist concept of cause and effect. In the beginning, it seems quite simple. Good acts bring good effects, bad acts bring bad effects, and certain things are set, e.g. the hawk always attacks the pheasant, and the cat always bites the rat.

Nothing leads one to reflect on the laws of karma so much as examples of people in lofty positions falling from grace at a single blow. In the first poem Ikkyū thinks of Yang Kuei-fei. So great was her success that the mothers and fathers of China began to wish for girls instead of boys. However, no sooner had she reached her peak than she was cut down by fate during the An Lu-shan rebellion. Her lover, the emperor Hsuan-tsung was in the same position. Having found a woman who pleased him more than anything in the world, he was forced to kill her the next moment. The second poem brings the resolution to this seemingly untenable situation; everything is as it should be, only false thinking makes it seem otherwise and there is always Te-shan's stick and Rinzai's shout to cure that. The third and
fourth poems present a positive and negative attitude towards the world and more particularly the situation of Hsüan-tsung and Yang Kuei-fei. They correspond roughly to the last two of Rinzai's four categories, the positive and negative ways of stating the truth of the universe.

The third poem presents the positive attitude. It delights in Yang Kuei-fei's beauty and predicts that this great beauty will be reincarnated time and time again into the world. The poem ends on the hopeful note that Yang Kuei-fei may be reincarnated in Japan next time. This attitude sees the whole world as a stage and players forever playing out dramas that, if not real, are beautiful. The fourth poem presents a negative attitude to the same situation. All the world is a dream, and nobody can escape suffering unless they escape the dream altogether. In essence, the universe is void and colorless, and there you will find the spirit of Ma-wei.
鷹鉤 鼠猫元自自然威音劫来旧因縁照看華清残月曉 明皇亀鑑馬嵬前

yōchi somyō moto jinen
iongō-rai kyū innen
terashī miru kasei zangetsu no akatsuki
meikō no kikan bakai no mae
Hawk and pheasant, rat and cat, are originally so of themselves.
Since time immemorial the ancient law of karma.
To see the waning moon at dawn at Hua-ch'ing,
Was Hsuan-tsung's reminder of what happened at Ma-wei.

Hua-ch'ing: A palace built by the T'ang emperor Hsuan-tsung for his favorite concubine Yang Kuei-fei.  
Hsuan-tsung's reminder: Hsuan-tsung was so infatuated with his concubine Yang Kuei-fei that he shamefully neglected the affairs of state. Because of his negligence and the lavish amounts of money he squandered on building palaces and gardens for his favorite, the country was on the brink of financial ruin. An army officer, An Lu-shan, seeing his opportunity, started a revolt and overran the capital. The emperor and his court were forced to flee with the remnants of the imperial army. At Ma-wei, the army refused to defend the emperor until he killed Yang Kuei-fei whom they considered responsible for the decline of the country. To save the dynasty, Hsuan-tsung was forced to kill her himself. This pacified the troops and was a turning point in his fortunes, for the imperial army soon made steady gains and finally restored him to the capital. Hsuan-tsung never forgot Yang Kuei-fei, however, and lived out the rest of his life grieving over his loss.
過現未誰人了達
悪人沈淪善者脱
風流可愛案月
徳山棒今臨濟唱

kagenmi tarebito ka ryōdatsusu
akunin wa chinrin-shi zensha wa datsusu
fūryū aisubeshi kōan madokanari
takusan no bō rinzai no katsu
Past, present, and future, who comprehends it?
Bad people sink, good people are released;
Beauty must be loved, the kōan is complete:
Te-shan's stick, Rinzai's shout.

Te-shan's stick: Te-shan was noted for using the rod in Zen teaching. He is recorded as saying to a group of followers, "Whether a person can explain or not, he receives thirty blows with the stick."\(^{34}\)

Rinzai's shout: Rinzai was equally famous for shouting.
風流脂粉又紅粧
等妙如來李斷腸
知是馬嵬泉下魄
離魂倩女謁扶桑

ふるゆ no しふん mata こうしょう
tōmyō no にやrai だんちょ o いかんせん
しんう kore はかい senka no はく
りくon no senjo fusō ni takuseraru
The elegance of powder and rouge;
Even a supremely enlightened buddha, how could he not be moved?
Knowing this is the soul of Ma-wei Spring:
The beauty's departed soul was perhaps banished to Japan.
身心不定仮兼真
欲界衆生沈苦辛
愁夢三生六十劫
劫空無色馬嵬神

shinjin sadamārazu ke to shin to
yokkai no shūjō kushin ni shizumu
shūmu sanshō rokujū go
gōkū mushiki bakai no kami
Body and mind cannot be separated into illusory or real.

In the world of desire, everyone sinks into suffering.

Bittersweet dream, past, present and future, sixty kalpas.

The kalpas are void and formless, the spirit of Ma-wei.

Kalpa: A Buddhist measurement of time, defined in such poetic ways as "the period required for a celestial woman to wear away a ten-mile cubic stone if she touched it with her garments once every three years."35
うし

irui-kōchū kore waga sō
nō wa kyō ni yori mata kyō wa nō ni yoru
shushō bōkyakusu raiji no michi
shirazu tōnen ta ga uji no sō
The Cow

Come among the beasts to teach, this is what I
have done.

What you can do depends on where you are, where
you are depends on what you can do.

We are born and forget the path by which we
came;

No one knows in those times what monk's name I
had.

Come among the beasts to teach: A specific Buddhist term for a
teacher being born as an animal in order to explicate the dharma.36

In this poem, Ikkyū again embellishes the theme of Wei-shan's
kōan about coming back as a cow. He seems to have found it end-
lessly amusing. In this poem the cow speaks in the first person,
and the circumstances surrounding the quatrain's composition ex-
plain why. The story goes that one day Ikkyū visited the house of
a temple lay supporter. In an enclosure he noticed an old cow and
wrote this poem which he then hung on the cow's horn just as
though it was a poem the cow might say. The next day the cow
died. When the owner saw Ikkyū, he teased him, saying "Your poem
killed my cow." Ikkyū laughed.37
岩頭船居図

会昌以後ң僧形
一段風流何似生
舞掉未懷為人手
杜鵑叫月衣三更

gantō senkyo no zu
eshō igo sōgyō o yaburu
ichidan no furyū kajisei
tō o mawashite imada inin no te o futokoro ni sezu
token tsuki ni sakende yo san kō
After Hui-ch'ang, monks were abolished;
A little more graceful, how about it?
Yen-t'ou sculled the oar so skillfully,
you would not think it was by human hand.
A cuckoo cries at the moon—midnight.

Yen-t'ou Ch'uan-huo (Gantō Zenkatsu, 827-887): Another T'ang Zen master, he was eighteen when the emperor Wu-tsung launched a brief but severe persecution of Buddhism. Yen-t'ou went into hiding as a ferryman.

Hui-ch'ang: The reign title of the time when the persecution was started.

The cuckoo calling through the moonlit night is reminiscent of the conditions surrounding Ikkyū's own enlightenment.

One would expect a Buddhist monk to find any persecution of Buddhism unfortunate, but this was not the case with Ikkyū. He regarded most pompous monks just as odious as the T'ang emperor did. And what could be a more delightful and appropriate occupation for a Buddhist monk than that of a ferryman! After all, Buddha's law is often likened to a ferryboat crossing to the shore of enlightenment.
贊法然上人
法然伝聞活如来
安坐蓮華上品白
教智者如尼入道
一枚起請最奇哉

hōnen shōnin o sansu
hōnen tsutaekiku katsu nyorai
anzasu renge jōbon dai
chisha o shite ni-nyūdō no gotoku narashimu
ichimai no kishō mottomo ki naru kana
Praising Saint Hōnen

Honen, I have heard, was a living buddha,
Peacefully sitting on the highest rank of the lotus dais,
Teaching learned men as though they were nuns and lay followers.
Hōnen's One Sheet Document, how marvelous!

Hōnen (1133-1212): Founder of the Jōdoshū or Pure Land Sect, which focused its attention on the most compassionate of all buddhas, Amida.

As though they were nuns and lay followers: As though they were illiterate.

Honen's One Sheet Document contains the essence of his doctrine:
The method of final salvation that I have pronounced is neither a sort of meditation such as has been practised by many scholars in China and Japan, nor is it a repetition of the Buddha's name by those who have studied and understood the deep meaning of it. It is nothing but the mere repetition of the "Namu Amida Butsu" without a doubt in his mercy, whereby one may be born into the Land of Perfect Bliss....Those who believe this, though they clearly understood all the teachings Shakya taught throughout his whole life, should behave themselves like simple-minded folk, who know not a single letter, or like ignorant nuns or monks whose faith is implicitly simple. Thus without pedantic airs, they should fervently practise the repetition of the name of Amida, and that alone. 39

Although considered to be doctrinally opposed to each other, the Pure Land Sect and Zen both reject the scholastic or intellectual approach to Buddhism. Zen is always emphasizing the inadequacy of words to convey the truth, while the Pure Land Sect considers intellectual knowledge a hindrance to salvation. Ikkyū, however, is not praising Hōnen's doctrine here so much as his overwhelming genuineness as compared with some of the insincere Zen monks with whom Ikkyū was acquainted.
贊 二祖
大唐今古没禅師
断臂虚伝人不知
只許南山道宜筆
恰如痛所下針锥

niso o sansu
taitō konko zenshi nashi
dambi no kyoden hito shirazu
tada yurusu nanzan dōsen ga fude
atakamo tsūsho ni shinsui o orosu ga gotoshi
73

Praising the Second Patriarch

There have been no great Zen masters since the time of T'ang.

No one knows the legend of Dambi anymore;

Only Nan-shan Tao-hsuan's pen is allowed

As if the real story were a needle applied to a painful spot.

The Second Patriarch Hui-k'o 慧可 (Niso Eka, 487-593) received his transmission at the age of thirty-two from the First Patriarch Bodhidharma. (See following stories)

Dambi: A nickname for the Second Patriarch, meaning "severed arm." Here is one version of how he lost his arm:

Daruma sat staring at the wall; Hui-k'o stood in the snow and...cut off his arm, saying, "My mind is not yet pacified. Please, master, pacify my mind." Daruma said, "Then bring out your mind and show it to me." Hui-k'o said, "But whenever I look for my mind, I cannot find it." "There," said Daruma, "I have pacified your mind."^1

Nan-shan Tao-hsuan 南山道宣 (Nanzan Dōsen, 596-667): Founder of the Nan-shan Lu-tsung 南山律宗 in China. His story of how the Second Patriarch lost his arm was apparently quite current in Japan at Ikkyū's time.

The great Patriarch Hui-k'o met robbers and had his arm cut off. Controlling his mind with Buddha's dharma, he did not feel any pain; he burned the wound and bound it up with cloth. As though he had been on his way begging, he did not tell anyone. Later, a monk named Lin also met robbers and had his arm cut off, and he shouted through the night. Hui-k'o came and tended his wounds and begged food for him. Lin got angry with Hui-k'o's clumsiness. Hui-k'o said, "You have rice cakes in front of you, why don't you wrap them up?" Lin said, "I have lost an arm, don't you see?" Hui-k'o said, "I don't have an arm either, what is there to get angry about?"^2
Ikkyū obviously preferred the traditional version of the story which was used as a kōan, not because it was historically more accurate but because it was closer to the truth of Zen. People generally abhorred the idea of a monk cutting off his arm for the sake of a few words of enlightenment and they preferred Nan-shan Tao-hsuan's version, so typical of the glowing accounts of famous monks' endurance of pain. It is an edifying story but not conducive to pushing the mind beyond its conventional limits.
己眼未明底因甚
将虚空作布 Rudd

画餅冷腸飢未盈
娘生己眼見如盲
寒裳一夜思衣意
羅縷千重暗現成

kogan imada akiraka narazaru tei,
nani ni yotte-ka kokū o motte
fuko to nashite tsuku

gabyō reichō ue imada mitazu
nyōjō no kogan mite mō no gotoshi
kandō ichi ya koromo o omou i
raki senjū an ni genjō
One's Own Eyes Not Yet Clear, How With Empty Space Make Cotton Breeches to Wear?

Painted rice cakes, cold stomach, hungry, never full.

Born of woman with eyes of flesh seeing as though blind.

In the cold hall, one night, think of clothes,

Figured gauze, a thousand folds, appears in the darkness.

Painted rice cakes: A metaphor for unreal things which bring no satisfaction.

Appears: The sudden appearance of myriad things as they are.

This poem and the next two comprise a group entitled "Hsu-t'ang's three sayings of enlightenment." Such sayings were composed for many great Zen monks. Ikkyū wrote poems for the sandendo of the masters Chao-chou, Daitō, Seng-yuan, and Hsu-t'ang. I found the poems about Hsu-t'ang the most interesting. Hsu-t'ang's sayings provide the titles for the three poems.
地為牢底因
甚透者簡不過

何事春遊興未窮
人心尤其是客盈弓
天堂成就地獄滅
日永落花飛絮中

chi ni kakushite, rō to nasu tei, nani ni yotte ka shako o tōri sugizaru
nanigoto zo shunyū kyō imada kiwamarazu jinshin wa mottomo kore kakuhai no kyū tendō jōjushi, jigoku metsusu hi wa nagashi rakka hijo no uchi
Divide the Earth, Make a Cage,
How is it That You Penetrate But
Do Not Pass Through?

Why is my enthusiasm for spring revelry never exhausted?
People's minds are just like the bow in the guest's cup.
Heaven attained, hell is destroyed.
All day long amid falling flowers and flying willow fluff.

The bow in the guest's cup: A metaphor about the illusions that man's mind is prey to. It is based upon a story about a man who went to visit a friend and accepted a cup of wine. In the cup, he saw a snake but said nothing and finished drinking. When he left, he felt very ill and attributed it to the snake. He did not visit that friend for a long time. Finally, he had occasion to go again. His friend asked him why he had stayed away so long. He told him about the snake and how he had become ill. The friend gave him another cup of wine; the latter sat in the same place and saw another snake in his cup. He told his friend who pointed to a bow on the wall that was decorated with a snake design and was reflected in his cup. The snake was not real and yet the man had become ill.
入海算沙底因
甚針鋒頭上翹足
撒土算沙深立功
針鋒翹腳現神通
山僧者裏無能漢
東海児孫天沢風

kai ni irite isago o kazouru tei,
nani ni yotte ka shinbō tōjō ni
ashi o tsumadatsu
do o satsushi isago o kazoete fukaku kō o tatsu
shinbō ni ashi o tsumadatete jinzū o genzu
sanzō ga shari munō no kan
tōkai no jison tentaku no kaze
Go to the Sea and Count the Sands,

How do you Stand Tiptoe on the

Head of a Needle?

Scatter the earth and count the sands, it builds up great merit.

Stand tiptoe on the point of a needle and superhuman powers appear.

Among the mountain monks, there is no one of ability;

The son of the Eastern Sea is of Tien-che's style.

The son of the Eastern Sea: Ikkyū.

Tien-che: Another name for Hsü-t'ang.