



Passing Through the Gateless Barrier: Koan Practice for Real Life

Guo Gu

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Gateways to awakening surround us at every moment of our lives. The whole purpose of *kōan* (*gong'an*, in Chinese) practice is to keep us from missing these myriad opportunities by leading us to certain gates that have traditionally been effective for people to access that marvelous awakening. The forty-eight *kōans* of the *Gateless Barrier* (Chinese: *Wumenguan*; Japanese: *Mumonkan*) have been waking people up for well over eight hundred years. Chan teacher Guo Gu provides here a fresh translation of the classic text, along with the first English commentary by a teacher of the Chinese tradition from which it originated. He shows that the *kōans* in this text are not mere stories from a distant past, but are rather pointers to the places in our lives where we get stuck—and that each sticking point, when examined, can become a gateless barrier through which we can enter into profound wisdom.

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