

55.

The newest preacher in Kōdai-ji temple, which sits in the heart of old Kyoto, is an android machine named Mindar. Its slender, mechatronic body is made from aluminum with a plastic polymer skin covering its face, hands, and shoulders. Cameras implanted into Mindar's eye allows the humanoid robot to give the impression of eye contact by following others with its gaze. Androgynous in appearance, the Mindar sits permanently in Kyōka Hall and delivers sermons on the sutras, Zen practice, and leads the practitioners into mantra recitation.

The human Zen masters, infamous for their elusiveness, often had no more than a few minutes each day for their students. This prompted their students to spend many hours crafting their perfect questions – on existence, on compassion, on one's karmic burdens. Mindar, however, is always available. Mindar has read all the Pali and Sanskrit canons ten thousand times over. If Mindar ever reached enlightenment it would be impossible to tell from its serene, silicone face.

Past the first brief months of novelty, however, the regular temple-goers at Kōdai-ji grew bored of the new preacher and trickled away into their typical infrequency.

AND WHY HAVE YOU ALLOWED A MACHINE
TO RECITE THE HEART SUTRA
IN YOUR PLACE?

61.

It was after becoming vegan that Jane Goodall came to encounter in the Tokyo aquarium a species of fish which had as its only food source the eyes of other fish.

SHE WOULD NOT LET HER SCIENTIFIC GAZE
CLOUD HER JUDGEMENT

62.

The orphan orangutans at the Nyaru Menteng shelter in Borneo, Indonesia, are rescued from inhospitable conditions and taught by human beings the skills for survival which their wild counterparts learn by their mother's side – climbing, nest-building, coconut shelling, foraging for ants. These orphans have been disabled by poachers, kept as caged pets in Saudi Arabia, and trained as circus performers. Their human caretakers must delicately overcome these childhood habits and traumas to coach these creatures back into life in untouched nature.

Orangutans are considered the gentlest of the great apes. Yet, if the decade-long rehabilitation proves successful, teenaged orangutans start showing signs of an innate aggression. Nearly too large to contain, Casper, a 200lbs dominant male with mature facial phalanges and the strength of seven men, roars and bears his teeth as he chases away his once-caretakers into the safety of the river.

For once the humans are not offended. Drenched and leech-ridden with their heartbeats pounding through their ears, they grin ecstatically at each other. Territorial hostility is the final benchmark for a complete return to wildness. Casper's violence is recorded on their dripping notepads with a note of triumph.

WILDNESS IS SOMETHING
TO BE ACHIEVED