



A Single Thread Practice Book

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Actualizing the Fundamental Point

Genjokoan by Eihei Dogen

As all things are buddha-dharma, there is delusion and realization, practice, and birth and death, and there are buddhas and sentient beings. As the myriad things are without an abiding self, there is no delusion, no realization, no buddha, no sentient being, no birth, and death.

The buddha way is, leaping clear of the many and the one; thus, there are birth and death, delusion and realization, sentient beings and buddhas. Yet in attachment blossoms fall, and in aversion weeds spread.

To carry yourself forward and experience myriad things is delusion. That myriad things come forth and experience themselves is awakening. Those who have great realization of delusion are buddhas; those who are greatly deluded about realization are sentient beings. Further, there are those who continue realizing beyond realization, who are in delusion throughout delusion.

When buddhas are truly buddhas they do not necessarily, notice that they are buddhas. However, they are actualized buddhas, who go on actualizing buddhas. When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body-and-mind, you grasp things directly. Unlike things and their reflections in the mirror, and unlike the moon and its reflection in the water, when one side is illumined the other side is dark.

To study the buddha way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of realization remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly. When you first seek dharma, you imagine you are far away from its environs. But dharma is already correctly transmitted; you are immediately your original self.

When you ride in a boat and watch the shore, you might assume that the shore is moving. But when you keep your eyes closely on the boat, you can see that the boat moves.

Similarly, if you examine myriad things with a confused body and mind you might suppose that your mind and nature are permanent. When you practice intimately and return to where you are, it will be clear that nothing at all has unchanging self.

Firewood becomes ash, and it does not become firewood again. Yet do not suppose that the ash is future and the firewood past. You should understand that firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood, which fully includes past and future and is independent of past and future. Ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash, which fully includes future and past. Just as firewood does not become firewood again after it is ash, you do not return to birth after death.

This being so, it is an established way in buddha-dharma to deny that birth turns into death. Accordingly, birth is understood as no-birth. It is an unshakable teaching in Buddha's discourse that death does not turn into birth. Accordingly, death is understood as no-death.

Birth is an expression complete this moment. Death is an expression complete this moment. They are like winter and spring. You do not call winter the beginning of spring, nor summer the end of spring.

Enlightenment is like the moon reflected on the water. The moon does not get wet, nor is the water broken. Although its light is wide and great, the moon is reflected even in a puddle an inch wide. The whole moon and the entire sky are reflected in dewdrops on the grass, or even in one drop of water.

Enlightenment does not divide you, just as the moon does not break the water. You cannot hinder enlightenment, just as a drop of water does not hinder the moon in the sky.

The depth of the drop is the height of the moon. Each reflection, however long or short its duration, manifests the vastness of the dewdrop, and realizes the limitlessness of the moonlight in the sky.

When dharma does not fill your whole body and mind, you think it is already sufficient. When dharma fills your body and mind, you understand that something is missing.

For example, when you sail out in a boat to the middle of an ocean where no land is in sight, and view the four directions, the ocean looks circular, and does not look any other way. But the ocean is neither round nor square; its features are infinite in variety. It is like a palace. It is like a jewel. It only look circular as far as you can see at that time. All things are like this.

Though there are many features in the dusty world and the world beyond conditions, you see and understand only what your eye of practice can reach. In order to learn the nature of the myriad things, you must know that although they may look round or square, the other features of oceans and mountains are infinite in variety; whole worlds are there. It is so not only around you, but also directly beneath your feet, or in a drop of water.

A fish swims in the ocean, and no matter how far it swims there is no end to the water. A bird flies in the sky, and no matter how far it flies there is no end to the air. However, the fish and the bird have never left their elements. When their activity is large their field is large. When their need is small their field is small. Thus, each of them totally covers its full range, and each of them totally experiences its realm. If the bird leaves the air it will die at once. If the fish leaves the water it will die at once.

Know that water is life and air is life. The bird is life and the fish is life. Life must be the bird and life must be the fish. It is possible to illustrate this with more analogies. Practice, enlightenment, and people are like this.

Now if a bird or a fish tries to reach the end of its element before moving in it, this bird or this fish will not find its way or its place. When you find your place where you are, practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point. When you find you way at this moment, practice occurs, actualizing the fundamental point; for the place, the way, is neither large nor small, neither yours nor others'. The place, the way, has not carried over from the past and it is not merely arising now.

Accordingly, in the practice-enlightenment of the buddha way, meeting one thing is mastering it--doing one practice is practicing completely. Here is the place; here the way unfolds. The boundary of realization is not distinct, for the realization comes forth simultaneously with the mastery of buddha-dharma. Do not suppose that what you realize becomes your knowledge and is grasped by your consciousness. Although actualized immediately, the inconceivable may not be apparent. Its appearance is beyond your knowledge.

Zen master Baoche of Mt. Mayu was fanning himself. A monk approached and said, "Master, the nature of wind is permanent and there is no place it does not reach. Why, then, do you fan yourself?"

"Although you understand that the nature of the wind is permanent," Baoche replied, "you do not understand the meaning of its reaching everywhere."

"What is the meaning of its reaching everywhere?" asked the monk again.

The master just kept fanning himself. The monk bowed deeply.

The actualization of the buddha-dharma, the vital path of its correct transmission, is like this. If you say that you do not need to fan yourself because the nature of wind is permanent and you can have wind without fanning, you will understand neither permanence nor the nature of wind. The nature of wind is permanent; because of that, the wind of the buddha's house brings forth the gold of the earth and makes fragrant the cream of the long river.

The All-Sidedness of the Bodhisattva; Regarder of the Cries of the World

"World-honored One with all the mystic signs!
Let me now again inquire of him:
For what cause is this Buddha-son named
Regarder of the Cries of the World?"

The Honored-One with all the mystic signs replied--

Listen to the deeds of the Cry Regarder.
Who well responds to every quarter,
Whose vast vow is as deep as the sea,
Throughout eons beyond reckoning.
Serving many thousands of kotis of buddhas,
The Cry Regarder has vowed a great pure vow.
Let me briefly tell you.
Those who hear, see and bear
Cry Regarder unremittingly in mind,
Will be able to end the sorrows of existence.
Though others with harmful intent
Throw them into a burning pit,
Let me think of the Cry Regarder's power
And the fire pit will become a pool.
Or driven along a great ocean,
In peril of dragons, fishes, and demons,
Let them think of the Cry Regarder's power
And waves cannot submerge them
Or if from the peak of Sumeru,
They would hurled down,
Let them think of the Cry Regarder's power

And like the sun they will stand firm in the sky.

Or if, pursued by the wicked

And cast down from Mount Diamond

They think of the Cry Regarder's power,

Not a hair shall be injured.

Or if, meeting with encompassing foes,

Each with sword drawn to strike them,

They think of the Cry Regarder's power,

All wicked hearts will turn to kindness.

Or if, meeting suffering by royal command,

Their lives are to end in execution,

And they think of the Cry Regarder's power,

The executioner's sword will break in pieces.

Or if, imprisoned, shackled and chained,

Arms and legs in gyves and stocks,

They think of the Cry Regarder's power,

Freely they shall be released.

Or if by incantation and poisons

One seeks to hurt their bodies,

And they think of the Cry Regarder's power,

All will revert to their originator.

Or if, meeting evil rakshasas,

Venomous dragons and demons,

They think of the Cry Regarder's power,

At once none will dare to hurt them.

If, encompassed by evil beasts,

Tusks sharp and claws fearful,

They think of the Cry Regarder's power,

The beasts will flee in every direction.

If, scorched by the fire-flame

Or the poisonous breath

Of boas, vipers and scorpions,
They think of the Cry Regarder's power,
And speak instantly the serpents will retreat.
Clouds thunder and lightning flashes,
One thinks of the Cry Regarder's power,
And all instantly are scattered.
The living, crushed and harassed,
Oppressed by countless pains:
The Cry Regarder with mystic wisdom
Can save such a suffering world.
Perfect in supernatural powers,
Widely practiced in wisdom and tact,
In the lands of the Universe there is no place
Where the Cry Regarder does not appear.
All the evil states of existence,
Hells, ghosts and animals,
Sorrows of birth, age, disease, death,
All by degrees are ended by the Cry Regarder.
True regard, serene regard,
Far-reaching wise regard,
Regard of pity, compassionate regard,
Ever longed for, ever looked for!
Pure and serene in radiance,
Wisdom's sun destroying darkness,
Subduer of woes of storm and fire,
Who illumines all the world!
Law of pity, thunder quivering,
Compassion wondrous as a great cloud,
Pouring spiritual rain like nectar,
Quenching the flames of distress!
In disputes before a magistrate,

Or in fear in battle's array,
If one thinks of the Cry Regarder's power
All enemies will be routed.
Oh wondrous voice, voice of the world-regarder,
Brahma-voice, voice of the rolling tide,
Voice all world-surpassing,
Therefore ever to be kept in mind,
With never a doubting thought.
Regarder of the World's Cries, pure and holy,
In pain, distress, death, calamity,
Able to be a sure reliance,
Perfect in all merit,
With compassionate eyes beholding all,
Boundless ocean of blessings!
Let us revere and prostrate ourselves
Before the Cry Regarder.

Before Lecture or Study

An unsurpassed, penetrating, and perfect Dharma
Is rarely met with, even in a hundred, thousand, million kalpas,
Having it to see and listen to, to remember and accept,
I vow to taste the of the Tatagatha's words.

After Lecture or Study

May our intention equally penetrate every being and place with the
True merit of Buddha's way.
Beings are numberless; I vow to save them.
Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them.
Dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter them.
Buddha's Way is unsurpassable; I vow to become it.

Bodhisattva's Prayer

The Bodhisattva is like the Mightiest of Warriors;
But the bodhisattva's enemies are not common foes of flesh and bone.

The bodhisattva's fight is with the inner delusions, the afflictions of self-cherishing and ego-grasping, those most terrible of demons that catch living beings in the snare of confusion and cause them forever to wander in pain, frustration and sorrow.

The bodhisattva's mission is to harm ignorance and delusion, never living beings. These, the bodhisattva looks upon with kindness, patience and empathy cherishing them like a mother cherishes her only child.

The bodhisattva is the real hero, calmly facing any hardship in order to bring peace, happiness and liberation to the world.

Bodhisattva's Vow

When I a student of the Dharma

Look at the real form of the universe,

All is the never-failing manifestation

Of the mysterious truth of Tathagata.

In any event, in any moment, and in any place,

None can be other than the marvelous revelation

Of its glorious light.

This realization made our patriarchs and virtuous masters

Extend tender care, with a worshipping heart ,

Even to such beings as beasts and birds.

This realization teaches us that our daily food and drink,

Clothes and protections of life are the warm flesh and blood,

The merciful incarnation of Buddha.

Who can be ungrateful or not respectful

Even to senseless things, not to speak of a man?

Even though he may be a fool,

Be warm and compassionate toward him.

If by chance he should turn against us,

And abuse and persecute us, we should

Bow down with humble words, in reverent belief
That he is the merciful avatar of Buddha,
Who uses devices to emancipate us from sinful karma
That has been produced and accumulated upon ourselves
By our own egoistic delusion and attachment
Through the countless cycles of kalpa.
Then in each moment's flash of our thought
There will grow a lotus flower,
And on each lotus flower will reveal a Buddha.
These Buddhas will glorify Sukhavati,
The Pure Land, every moment, everywhere.
May we extend this mind over the whole universe
So that we and all beings together
May attain maturity in Buddha's wisdom.

The Diamond Sutra

The Practice of Charity—Dana Paramita

Q: Though the sentient beings, thus to be delivered by me are innumerable and without limit, yet in reality, there are no sentient beings to be delivered. And why?

A: Because should there exist in the minds of Bodhisattvas, such arbitrary conceptions of phenomena, such as the existence of one's own self or the self of another, or selfless as divided into beings or selfness as unified into one universal self existing eternally, they would be unworthy to be called Bodhisattvas.

Q: When the Buddha speaks of "great universes" does he have in mind any definite idea?

A: No! When the Buddha uses the words "great universes" he does not assert any definite idea. It merely uses the words as words.

Q: Is this true for the words Buddha and Dharma?

A: There are no Buddhas and no dharmas.

The Practice of Tranquility—Prajna Paramita

Q: Should a disciple strive to attain Buddhahood?

A: No, that would mean the disciple is striving to attain something limited but true Buddhahood whose essence is identical with the essence of all things, is inconceivable and beyond all striving.

Q: How is it possible to explain this sutra without ideas of things and dharmas?

A: This sutra can be only explained by keeping the mind in perfect tranquility and in oneness.

The Practice of Humility—Kahanti Paramita

Q: Should a bodhisattva even make any assertion such as “I have entered the stream.”?

A: No! Because speaking truly he has not entered anything nor has his mind entered any such idea as form, sound, taste, smell, touch or mind.

Q: Because of his virtue will Buddha be reborn either in this world or any other world?

A: No! Speaking truly there will be no rebirth either in this world or in any other world. It is because he knows this, the Buddha is called a Buddha.

Q: Is there any such one as a fully enlightened one?

A: No! Should a disciple cherish in his mind such as an idea as “I have become enlightened,” he would soon be grasping after such things as his own selfhood or other selves or a universal self.

The Practice of Selfless Kindness—Sita Paramita

Q: If there is no distinction between one’s own self and selfhood of others, how should we practice kindness?

A: We should practice kindness by giving not objective gifts alone, but the selfless gifts of kindness and sympathetic joy.

Q: Is there any merit for acts of kindness?

A: Bodhisattvas never seek merit nor look upon kind acts as a private possession but as the common possession of all beings.

The Practice of Wisdom—Prajna Paramita

Q: What does it mean to say there is no such thing as “anutarrs-samyak-sambodhi” nor is it possible for the Buddha to teach any fixed dharma?

A: This means that Bodhisattvas are not enlightened by any fixed teachings but by an intuitive process that is spontaneous and natural.

Q: What does it mean to say the Buddha has come and gone?

A: The true meaning is that the Buddha is never coming from anywhere nor is he going anywhere. The name Buddha is merely a word.

And SO...

Q: Why does the Buddha use words and ideas in his teachings?

A: The Buddha uses words and ideas in his teaching in resemblance to a raft that is of use only to cross a river. As a raft is of no use after the river is crossed, it should be discarded. So, too, ideas about things should be given up as one attains enlightenment.

Q: Has the Buddha given us any definite teaching in this sutra?

A: No! Buddha has not given us any definite teaching in this sutra.

Dedications

By the truth and virtue of this practice:

May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness;

May all be free from suffering and the causes of suffering;

May all never separate from the sacred happiness devoid of suffering;

May all have equanimity;

Without too much attraction or too much aversion;

May all living believing in the equality of all who live.

All Buddhas, ten directions, three worlds,

All venerable ones, bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,

Wisdom beyond wisdom, maha prajna paramita.

Ji ho san shi I shi fu

Shi son bu sa mo ko sa

Mo ko ho ja ho ro mi

Discourse on Loving Kindness

(Metta Sutra)

This is what should be done

By the one who is skilled in goodness,

And who knows the path of peace:

Let them be able and upright,

Straightforward and gentle in speech.

Humble and not conceited,

Contented and easily satisfied.

Let none deceive another,

Or despise any being in any state.

Let none through anger or ill-will

Wish harm upon another.

Even as a mother protects with her very life her child, her only child,

Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways,

Peaceful and calm, and wise and skilled,

Not proud and demanding in nature.

Let them not do the slightest thing

That the wise would later reprove.

Wishing in gladness and in safety,

May all beings be at ease.

Whatever living beings there may be,

Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,

The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,

The seen and the unseen,

Those living near or far away,

Those born and to-be-born,

May all beings be at ease, with a boundless heart.

Should one cherish all living beings,

Radiating kindness over the entire world

Spreading upwards to the skies,

And downwards to the depths,

Outwards and unbounded,

Freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking,

Sitting or lying down,

Free from drowsiness,

One should sustain this recollection.

This is said to be the sublime abiding.

By not holding to fixed views

The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,

Being freed from all sense desires,

Is not born again into this world.

Dispeller of the Afflictions of All Beings

Honor the Lord Master of Healing, the King and Queen of Lapis Lazuli, Radiance, Tathagata, Arhat, Perfectly Enlightened One, saying:

“To the healing, to the healing, to the supreme healing, Svaha!”

EIHEI KOSO HOTSUGANMON

We vow with all beings, from this life on throughout countless lives, to hear the true Dharma; that upon hearing it, no doubt will arise in us, nor will we lack in faith; that upon meeting it, we shall renounce worldly affairs and maintain the Buddha Dharma; and that in doing so, the great earth and all living beings together will attain the Buddha Way. Although our past evil karma has greatly accumulated, indeed being the cause and condition of obstacles in practicing the Way, may all Buddhas and Ancestors who have attained the Buddha Way be compassionate to us and free us from karmic effects allowing us to practice the Way without hindrance. May they share with us their compassion which fills the boundless universe with the virtue of their enlightenment and teachings. Buddhas and Ancestors of old were as we; we, in future shall be Buddhas and Ancestors. Revering Buddhas and Ancestors, we are one Buddha and one Ancestor; awakening Bodhi-mind, we are one Bodhi-mind. Because they extend their compassion to us freely and without limit, we are able to attain Buddhahood and let go of the attainment.

Therefore, the Chan Master Lung-ya said:

“Those who in past lives were not enlightened will now be enlightened.

In this life, save the body which is the fruit of many lives.

Before Buddhas were enlightened, they were the same as we.

Enlightened people of today are exactly as those of old.”

Quietly explore the farthest reaches of these causes and conditions, as this practice is the exact transmission of a verified Buddha. Confessing and repenting in this way, one never fails to receive profound help from all Buddhas and Ancestors. By revealing and disclosing our lack of faith and practice before the Buddha, we melt away the root of transgressions by the power of our confession and repentance. This is the pure and simple color of true practice, of the true mind of faith, of the true body of faith.

ENMEI JUKKU KANNON GYO

KAN ZE ON

NA MU BUTSU

YO BUTSU U IN

YO BUTSU U EN

BUP PO SO EN

JO RAKU GA JO

CHO NEN KAN ZE ON

BO NEN KAN ZE ON

NEN NEN JU SHIN KI

NEN NEN FU RI SHIN

Veneration to the Buddha!

With Buddha I have origin;

With Buddha I have affinity;

Affinity with Buddha, Dharma, Sangha;

Constancy, joy, self, and purity.

Mornings, my thought is Kanzeon;

Evenings, my thought is Kanzeon.

Thought after thought arises in mind.

Thought after thought is not separate from mind.

Elementary Talk on Zen

MAN-AN Translated by Thomas Cleary in Minding Mind

Do not say that it is harder for laypeople living in the world of senses and desires to sit and meditate, or that it is hard, to concentrate with so many worldly duties, or that one with an official or professional career cannot practice Zen, or that the poor and the sickly do not have the power to work on the Way.

These excuses are all due to impotence of faith and superficiality of the thought of enlightenment. If you observe that the matter of life and death is serious, and that the world is really impermanent, the will for enlightenment will grow, the thieving heart of egoism, selfishness, pride, and covetousness will gradually die out, and you will come to work on the Way by sitting meditation in which principle and fact are one. Suppose you were to lose your only child in a crowd or drop an invaluable gem: do you think you would let the child or the jewel go at that, just because of the bustle and the mob? Would you not look for them even if you had a lot of work to do or were poor or sickly?

Even if you had to plunge into an immense crowd of people and had to continue searching into the night, you would not be easy in mind until you had found and retrieved your child or your jewel. To have been born human and heard true teaching is a very rare opportunity, so to neglect meditation because of your career is to treat the life of wisdom of the body of truths of the Buddha less seriously than worldly chattels. But if you search for wisdom single-mindedly like someone who has lost a child or dropped a gem, one day you will undoubtedly encounter it, whereupon you will light up with joy. People in all walks of life have all sorts of things to attend to, how could they have the leisure to sit silently all day in quiet contemplation?

Man-an (1591-1654) an-An Eishu was a prominent Soto Master of the early Edo period. He was a good friend of Suzuki Shosan, and tried to raise the Soto Zen of that period to a higher level.

Faith in Mind

(Attributed to the Third ancestor, Kanchi Sosan)

Attaining the Way is not difficult, just avoid picking and choosing. If you have neither aversion nor desire, you'll thoroughly understand. A hair's breadth difference is the gap between heaven and earth. If you want it to come forth, let there be no positive and negative, for such comparisons are a sickness of the mind. Without knowing the Great Mystery, quiet practice is useless. The great perfection is the same as vast space, lacking nothing, nothing extra. Due to picking up and discarding, you will not know it. Don't chase the conditioned nor abide in forbearing emptiness.

In singular equanimity the self is extinguished. Ceasing movement and returning to stillness, this is complete movement. But only suppress the two aspects, how can you realize unity? Not penetrating the one, the two lose their life. Reject existence and you fall into it, pursue emptiness and you move away from it. With many words and thoughts, you miss what is right before you. Cutting off words and thought, nothing remains unpenetrated. Return to the root and attain the essence, for if you chase the light you'll lose the way. But if you reflect the light for only a moment, all previous shadows are dispelled. All previous shadows are transformed because they were all due to delusive views. It's no use to seek the truth; just let false views cease.

Don't abide in duality and take care not to seek, for as soon as there is yes and no, the mind is lost in confusion. Two comes forth from one, but don't even hold the one, for when even the one mind is unborn, the myriad things are flawless, without flaws, without things. With no birth, no mind, function is lost to conditions, conditions persist in function, conditions arise from function, function is actualized from conditions. You should know that duality is originally one with emptiness, and one emptiness unifies duality, encompassing the myriad forms. Not perceiving refined or vulgar, is there any prejudice? The Great Way is vast, with neither ease nor difficulty. If you have biased views and doubts, and move too fast or slow, grasping the world without measure, then your mind has taken a wayward path. Let it all

naturally drop away and embody no coming or going. In accord with your fundamental nature, unite with the Way and wander the world without cares.

Being tied by thought runs counter to Truth, but sinking into a daze is not good. Don't belabor the spirit. Why adhere to intimate or distant? If you want to experience the one vehicle, don't malign the senses, for when the senses are not maligned, that itself is perfect awakening. The wise do not move, but the ignorant bind themselves. Though one Dharma differs not from another, the deluded self desires each, objectifying the mind to realize mind. Is this not a great error? Delusion gives rise to quietness or chaos, but enlightenment has no positive and negative. The duality of existence is born from false discrimination, flourishing dreams, and empty illusions. Why try to grab them? Gain and loss, true and false: drop them all in one moment. If the eyes don't sleep, all dreams disappear. If the mind does not go astray, the myriad Dharmas are but One and the One encompasses the Mystery.

In stillness, conditioned existence is forgotten, and the myriad things are seen equally, naturally returning to each one's own nature. When all dharmas are extinguished, it is immeasurable. Cease movement and no movement exists, when movement stops there is no cessation. Since two are not manifest, how is there even one? Finally, ultimately, principles do not exist. Bring forth the mind of equanimity and all activities will be put to rest, all doubts extinguished. True faith is upright and nothing then remains, nothing is remembered, and the empty brightness shines naturally, without effort of mind. There, not a thought can be measured. Reason and emotion can't conceive it. In the Dharma realm of true thusness, there is neither one nor self.

One should not hasten to behold it. Just say, "Not two," for in "not two," all things are united and there's nothing not included. The wise ones of the ten directions have entered this great understanding, an understanding which neither hastens nor tames. In ten thousand years, a single thought, not to be found within "existence and nonexistence," but meeting the eye in the ten directions. The smallest is no different from the largest; eliminating boundaries, the largest is the same as the smallest. Not seeing divisions, existence is but emptiness; emptiness, existence.

That which is not of this principle must not be preserved. The one is everything; everything, the one. If your understanding is this, what is left to accomplish? Faith and mind are undivided, nonduality is both faith and mind. The way of words is cut off, leaving no past, no future, no present.

End of Service

May our intentions equally penetrate every being and place with the true merit of Buddha's way:

Beings are numberless, I vow to save them

Delusions are inexhaustible, I vow to end them.

Dharma gate are boundless, I vow to enter them.

Buddha's way is unsurpassable, I vow to become it.

Life is precious, life is fragile

Death is sudden and strikes without warning.

Cause and effect are inescapable

Suffering in the conditioned world is inescapable.

Liberation is beneficial

A teacher is helpful.

The Five Remembrances

1. I am of the nature to grow old. There is no way to escape growing old.
2. I am of the nature to have ill-health. There is no way to escape having ill-health.
3. I am of the nature to die. There is no way to escape death.
4. All that is dear to me and everyone I love are of the nature to change. There is no escape being separated from them.
5. My deeds are my closest companions. I am the beneficiary of my deeds. My deeds are the ground on which I stand.

FUKANZAZENGI

By Eihei Dogen

The Way is basically perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent upon practice and realization? The Dharma-vehicle is free and untrammled. What need is there for concentrated effort? Indeed, the whole body is far beyond the world's dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from one, right where one is. What is the use of going off here and there to practice?

And yet, if there is the slightest discrepancy, the Way is as distant as heaven from earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the Mind is lost in confusion. Suppose one gains pride of understanding and inflates one's own enlightenment, glimpsing the wisdom that runs through all things, attaining the Way and clarifying the Mind, raising an aspiration to escalate the very sky. One is making the initial, partial excursions about the frontiers but is still somewhat deficient in the vital Way of total emancipation.

Need I mention the Buddha, who was possessed of inborn knowledge? The influence of his six years of upright sitting is noticeable still. Or Bodhidharma's transmission of the mind-seal?--the fame of his nine years of wall-sitting is celebrated to this day. Since this was the case with the saints of old, how can we today dispense with negotiation of the Way?

You should therefore cease from practice based on intellectual understanding, pursuing words and following after speech, and learn the backward step that turns your light inwardly to illuminate your self. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will be manifest. If you want to attain suchness, you should practice suchness without delay.

For zazen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Cast aside all involvements and cease all affairs. Do not think good or bad. Do not administer pros and cons. Cease all the movements of the conscious mind, the gauging of all thoughts and views. Have no designs on becoming a Buddha. Zazen has nothing whatever to do with sitting or lying down.

At the site of your regular sitting, spread out thick matting and place a cushion above it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position. In the full-lotus position, you first place your right foot on your left thigh and your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, you simply press your left foot against your right thigh. You should have your robes and belt loosely bound and arranged in order. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left palm (facing upwards) on your right palm, thumb-tips touching. Thus, sit upright in correct bodily posture, neither inclining to the left nor to the right, neither leaning forward nor backward. Be sure your ears are on a plane with your shoulders and your nose in line with your navel. Place your tongue against the front roof of your mouth, with teeth and lips both shut. Your eyes should always remain open, and you should breathe gently through your nose.

Once you have adjusted your posture, take a deep breath, inhale and exhale, rock your body right and left and settle into a steady, immobile sitting position. Think not-thinking. How do you think not thinking? Non-thinking. This in itself is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not learning meditation. It is simply the Dharma gate of repose and bliss, the practice-realization of totally culminated enlightenment. It is the manifestation of ultimate reality. Traps and snares can never reach it. Once its heart is grasped, you are like the dragon when he gains the water, like the tiger when she enters the mountain. For you must know that just there (in zazen) the right Dharma is manifesting itself and that, from the first, dullness and distraction are struck aside. When you arise from sitting, move slowly and quietly, calmly and deliberately. Do not rise suddenly or abruptly. In surveying the past, we find that transcendence of both unenlightenment and enlightenment, and dying while either sitting or standing, have all depended entirely on the strength (of zazen).

In addition, the bringing about of enlightenment by the opportunity provided by a finger, a banner, a needle, or a mallet, and the effecting of realization with the aid of a hossu (fly chasing stick), a fist, a staff, or a shout, cannot be fully understood by discriminative thinking. Indeed, it cannot be fully known by the practicing or realizing of supernatural powers. These actions come from the practice which is prior to discriminating mind. This being the case, intelligence or lack of it does not matter: between the dull and the sharp-

witted there is no distinction. If you concentrate your effort single-mindedly, that in itself is negotiating the Way. Practice-realization is naturally undefiled. Going forward (in practice) is a matter of everydayness.

In general, this world, and other worlds as well, both in India and China, equally hold the Buddha-seal, and over all prevails the character of this school, which is simply devotion to sitting, total engagement in immobile sitting. Although it is said that there are as many minds as there are persons, still they all negotiate the way solely in zazen. Why leave behind the seat that exists in your home and go aimlessly off to the dusty realms of other lands? If you make one misstep, you go astray from the Way directly before you. You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not use your time in vain. You are maintaining the essential working of the Buddha-Way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from the flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, destiny like the dart of lightning--emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash.

Please, honored followers of Zen, long accustomed to groping for the elephant, do not be suspicious of the true dragon. Devote your energies to a way that directly indicates the absolute. Revere the person of complete attainment who is beyond all human agency. Gain accord with the enlightenment of the Buddhas; succeed to the legitimate lineage of the ancestors' samadhi. Constantly perform in such a manner and you are assured of being a person such as they. Your treasure-store will open of itself, and you will use it at will.

HYMN TO THE PERFECTION OF WISDOM

Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom, the lovely, the holy. The Perfection of Wisdom gives light. Unstained, the entire world cannot stain her. She is the source of light, and from everyone in the triple world she removes darkness. Most excellent are her works. She brings light so that all fear and distress may be forsaken, and disperses the gloom and darkness of delusion. She herself is an organ of vision. She has a clear knowledge of the own-being of all dharmas, for she does not stray away from it. The Perfection of Wisdom of the Buddhas sets in motion the Wheel of Dharma.

IDENTITY OF RELATIVE AND ABSOLUTE (SANDOKAI)

By Zen Master Sekito Kisen

The mind of the Great Sage of India was
intimately conveyed from west to east.

Among human beings are wise ones and
fools, but in the Way there is no northern or
southern ancestor.

The subtle source is clear and bright; the
tributary streams flow through the darkness.

To be attached to things is illusion; to
encounter the absolute is not yet
enlightenment.

Each and all, the subjective and objective
spheres are related, and at the same time,
independent.

Related, yet working differently, though each
keeps its own place.

Form makes the character and appearance
different; sounds distinguish comfort and
discomfort.

The dark makes all words one; the
brightness distinguishes good and bad
phrases.

The four elements return to their nature as a
child to its mother.
Fire is hot, wind moves, water is wet, earth
hard. eyes see, ears hear, nose smells,
tongue tastes the salt and sour.

Each is independent of the other. Cause and
effect must return to the great reality. The
words high and low are used relatively.

Within light there is darkness,
But do not try to understand that darkness.

Within darkness there is light, but do not
look for that light.

Light and darkness is a pair, like the foot
before and the foot behind in walking.

Each thing has its own virtue and relates to
everything in function and position.

Ordinary life fits the absolute as a box and its
lid.

The absolute works together with the
relative like two arrows meeting in mid-air.

Reading words you should grasp the great
reality.

Do not judge by any standards.

If you do not see the Way, you do not see it
even as you walk on it.

When you walk the Way, it is not near, it is
not far.

If you are deluded, you are mountains and
rivers away from it.

I respectfully say to those who wish to be
enlightened:

“Do not waste your time by night or day.”

JIJUYU ZAMMAI

Ancestors and Buddhas, who have maintained the Buddha dharma, all have held that practice based upon proper sitting in zazen in jijuyu samadhi was the right path through which their enlightenment opened. In India and China, those who have gained enlightenment have all followed in this way of practice. It is based upon the right transmission of the wonderful means in private encounter from master to disciple and their receiving and maintaining of its authentic essence.

According to the authentic tradition of Buddhism, the Buddha dharma, transmitted rightly and directly from one to another, is the supreme of the supreme. From the first time you meet your master and receive the teaching, you have no need for either incense-offerings, homage-paying, nembutsu, penance disciplines, or silent sutra-readings; only cast off body and mind in zazen.

When even for a short period of time you sit properly in samadhi imprinting the Buddha-seal in deeds, words, and thoughts, each and every thing excluding none is the Buddha-seal, and all space without exception is enlightenment. Accordingly, it makes Buddha-tathagatas all increase the Dharma-joy of their original source, and renews the adornments of the Way of enlightenment. Then, when all classes of all beings in the ten directions of the universe--the hell-dwellers, hungry ghosts, and animals; the fighting demons, humans, and devas--all together at one time being bright and pure in body and mind, realize the stage of absolute emancipation and reveal their original aspect, at that time all things together come to realization in themselves of the true enlightenment of the Buddha, utilize the Buddha-body, immediately leap the confines of this personal enlightenment, sit properly beneath the kingly Tree of Enlightenment, turn simultaneously the great and utterly incomparable Dharma wheel, and expound the ultimate and profound prajna free from all human agency.

Since, moreover, these enlightened ones in their turn enter into the way of imperceptible mutual assistance, the person in zazen without fails cast off body and mind, severs the heretofore disordered and defiled thoughts and views emanating from his discriminating consciousness, conforms totally within himself to the genuine Buddha dharma, and assist universally in performing the work of buddhas at each of the various places the buddha-tathagatas teach, that are as infinitely numberless as the smallest atom particles--imparting universally the KI transcending Buddha, vigorously uplifting the Dharma (HO) Buddha. Then the land, the trees and grasses, fences, walls, tiles and pebbles, all the various things in the ten directions, perform the work of Buddhas. Because of this, all persons who share in the wind and water benefits thus produced receive the unperceived help of the Buddhas' wonderful and incomprehensible teaching and guidance, and all manifest their inherent enlightenment. Since all who receive and employ this fire and water turn round and round the teaching of original enlightenment, all who dwell and talk together with them also join with one another in possessing the inexhaustible Buddha-virtue, causing to spread and spread even wider, circulating the inexhaustible, unceasing, incomprehensible, and immeasurable Buddha dharma, inside and outside throughout the universe. Yet such things are not mingled in the perceptions of one sitting in zazen, because (this occurs) in the stillness of samadhi beyond human artifice, and is in itself realization. If practice and realization were two different stages as ordinary people consider them to be, the one sitting in zazen and things should perceive each other. To be associated with perceptions is not the mark of realization, because the mark of realization is to be beyond such illusions.

Moreover, although in realization the mind (of the zazen practitioner) and its objects both arise and disappear within the stillness of samadhi, since it occurs within the sphere of jijuyu it does not disturb a single mote of dust, nor infringe upon a single phenomenon. It does great and wide-ranging Buddha-work, and performs the exceedingly profound, recondite activities of preaching and enlightening. The trees, grasses, and land involved in this all emit a bright and shining light, and preach the profound and incomprehensible dharma; and it is endless. Trees and grasses, wall and fence expound and exalt the dharma for the sake of ordinary people, sages, and all living beings. Ordinary people, sages and all

living beings in turn preach and exalt the dharma for the sake of trees, grasses, wall, and fence. The dimension of self-enlightenment qua enlightening others basically is fully replete with the characteristics of realization, and causes the principle of realization unceasingly.

Because of this, when even just one person, at one time, sits in zazen, they become, imperceptively, one with each and all of the myriad things, and permeate completely all time, so that within the limitless universe, throughout past, future, and present, they are performing the eternal and ceaseless work of guiding beings to enlightenment. It is, for each and every thing, one and the same undifferentiated practice, and undifferentiated realization. Only this is not limited to the practice of sitting alone; the sound that issues from the striking of emptiness is an endless and wondrous voice that resounds before and after the fall of the hammer. And this is not all the practice of zazen does. Each and every thing is, in its original aspect, provided original practice--it cannot be measured or comprehended.

Kanzeon!
(Bodhisattva of Compassion)

At one with Buddha

Directly Buddha

Also indirectly Buddha

And indirectly Buddha

Dharma, Sangha joyful

Pure eternal being

Morning mind in Kanzeon.

Evening mind in Kanzeon

This moment arises from mind

This moment is not separate from mind.

THE MAHA PRAJNA PARAMITA HRIDAYA SUTRA **(The Heart Sutra)**

Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva when practicing deeply the prajna paramita perceived that all five skandas are empty and was saved from all suffering and distress.

O Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness; emptiness does not differ from form, that which is form is emptiness; that which is emptiness, form. The same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, consciousness.

O Shariputra, all dharmas are marked with emptiness; they do not appear, nor disappear, are not tainted not pure, do not increase nor decrease.

Therefore in emptiness, no form, no feelings, no perceptions, no impulses, no consciousness, no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realm of eyes and so forth until no realm or mind consciousness; no ignorance and also no extinction of it, and so forth until no old age and death and also no extinction of them; no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path, no cognition, also no attainment.

With nothing to attain the bodhisattvas depends on prajna paramita and the mind is no hindrance. Without any hindrance no fears exist; far apart from every perverted view the bodhisattva dwells in nirvana.

In the three worlds all Buddhas depend on prajna paramita and attain unsurpassed complete perfect enlightenment.

Therefore know the prajna paramita is the great transcendent mantra, is the great bright mantra, is the utmost mantra, is the supreme mantra, which is able to relieve all suffering and is true, not false. So proclaim the prajna paramita mantra, proclaim the mantra that says:

“GATE GATE, PARAGATE, PARASAMGATE BODHI! SVAHA!”

MEAL CHANT

(Before serving)

All: Buddha was born in Kapilavastu,
Enlightened in Magadha,
Taught in Varanasi,
Entered nirvana in Kushinagara.
Now we set out Buddha's own bowls
May we, with all living beings
Realize the emptiness of the three wheels:
Giver, receiver, and gift.

(After Bowls are Opened)

Leader: In the midst of the three treasures
Which verify our understanding,
Entrusting ourselves to the Sangha,

We invoke:

All: Vairochana Buddha, pure Dharmakaya;
Locana Buddha, complete Sambhogakaya;
Shakyamuni Buddha, myriad Nirmanakaya;
Maitreya Buddha, next to be born;
All buddhas throughout space and time;
Lotus of the Wondrous Dharma, Mahayana
Sutra;
Manjushri Bodhisattva, great wisdom;
Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, great activity;
Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, great
compassion;
All honored ones, bodhisattva mahasattvas,
Wisdom beyond wisdom,
Maha-prajnaparamita.

Leader at breakfast:

This morning meal of ten benefits
Nourishes us in our practice
Its rewards are boundless
Filling us with ease and joy

Leader at lunch:

Are offered to Buddha and Sangha
May all sentient beings in the universe
Be equally nourished

(After serving, before eating)

All:

We reflect on the effort that brought us this food and
consider how it comes to us.
We reflect on our virtue and practice, and whether
we are worthy of this offering;
We regard it as essential to keep the mind free from
excesses, such as greed;
We regard this food as good medicine to sustain our
life.
For the sake of enlightenment, we now receive this
food.

First, this is for the Three Treasures
Next, for the four benefactors;
Finally, for the beings in the six realms
May all be equally nourished.

The first portion is to end all evil.
The second is to cultivate all good.
The third is to free all beings,
May we all realize the Buddha Way

(After washing bowls as buckets enter)

All: This water we use to wash our bowls
tastes like ambrosia.
We offer it to the many spirits
to satisfy them.
Om, Mahakushalaya Svaha!

(After Meal)

Kokyo: Abiding in this ephemeral world
Like a lotus in muddy water,
The mind is pure and goes beyond
Thus we bow to Buddha.

The Merging of Difference and Unity

The mind of the great sage of India
Is intimately communicated between east and west.
People's faculties may be keen or dull,
But in the path there is no southern or northern ancestors.
The spiritual source shines clear in the light;
The branching streams flow on in the dark.
Grasping things is basically delusion;
Merging with principle is still not enlightenment.
Each sense and every field
Interact and do not interact;
When interacting they also merge--
Otherwise, they remain in their own states.
Forms are basically different in material and appearance.
Sounds are fundamentally different in pleasant or harsh quality.
Darkness is a wore for merging upper and lower;
Light is an expression for distinguishing pure and defiled.
The four gross elements return to their own natures
Like a baby taking to its mother; Fire heats, wind moves,
Water wets, earth is solid. Eye and form, ear and sound;
Nose and smell, tongue and taste--
Thus in all things,

The leaves spread from the root;
The whole process must return to the source;
Noble and base are only manners of speaking.
Right in light there is darkness,
But don't confront it as darkness;
Right in the darkness there is light, but don't see it as light.
Light and dark are relative to one another
Like forward and backward steps.
All things have their function--
It is a matter of use in the appropriate situation.
Phenomena exists like a box and cover joining;
Principle accords like arrow points meeting.
Hearing the words, you should understand the source;
Don't make up standards on your own.
If you don't understand the path as it meets your eyes,
How can you know the way as you walk?
Progress is not a matter of far or near,
But if you are confused, mountains and rivers block your way.
I humbly say to those who study the mystery,
Don't waste time.

Opening a Path to the Ocean of Awakening Mind

(Short version)

Noble and peerless Infinite Compassion,
And all awakened and awakening beings,
May the truth in the fullness of your
intentions move all beings, in their
infinities, to the finest in awakening mind.

Those taken over by anger and hate
Are caught in the hell realms of fire and
ice. From all these beings, in their
infinities, I take into me their pain and
propensities. I give them the kindness
and love in my heart and good works
totally free of anger. With lives emptied
of anger and hell may they know a
timeless awareness as clear as a mirror,
The strong potential of Infinite
Compassion.

Those taken over by greed and want
are caught in the ghost realms of hunger
and thirst. From all these beings, in their
infinities, I take into me their pain and
propensities. I give them a mind that
knows restraint and good works not in
any way mercenary. With lives emptied
of greed and ghosts may they know a
timeless awareness that knows this from
that, the lotus potential of Infinite
Compassion

Those taken over by instinctual
functioning are caught in the animal

realms of reaction and habit. From all
these beings, in their infinities, I take into
me their pain and propensities. I give
them my intelligence, both innate and
acquired, a mind free of instinct and good
works, too with lives emptied of animals
and routines may they know a timeless
awareness that knows this from that The
flowering potential of Infinite
Compassion.

Those whom jealousy turns inside out
quarrel and fight in the titan realm. From
all these beings, in their infinities, I take
into me their pain and propensities. I give
them patience in thought, word and deed
and good works free from any grudge.
With lives emptied of jealousy and strife
may they know a timeless awareness that
sees just what to do. The action potential
of Infinite Compassion,

Those whom arrogance weighs down,
the gods, they struggle with loss and
shame. From all these beings, in their
infinities, I take into me their pain and
propensities. I give them all my hard
work and effort, a mind that knows no
pride at all and good works free from any
conceit. With lives emptied of gods and
defeat may they know a timeless
awareness that encompasses balance, the
jewel potential of Infinite Compassion.

Driven by patterns and blindness with no
beginning, humans follow the rounds of
birth, old age, illness and death. From all
these beings, in their infinities, I take into
me their pain and propensities. I give to
them all the virtue I've done in thought,

word and deed from beginningless time.
With lives emptied of toil, sweat and tears
may they know a timeless awareness that
is just there on its own,
The untainted presence of Infinite
Compassion.

I take into me all failings or faults In the
vows of freedom, awakening and
awareness. The virtue of keeping these
three noble vows I give to all beings, in
their infinities may they make their three
vows utterly pure, with not even a whiff
of failing arising, and be Being, the union
of all potential.

I take into me all acts that shorten life,
such as murder, sacrilege, or the
defacement of holy things. The virtue of
creating holy objects and protecting life I
give to all beings, in their infinities may
they not even hear of untimely death and
be Immeasurable Life.

All illness in beings I take into me
Whether from anxiety, apathy, ire or a
mix. Good works that bring comfort and
health—Ending violence or giving
medicine I give to all beings in their
infinities. May they be Medicine Buddha
of lapis blue form Who dispels all illness
throughout the three times.

I take into me robbery and all manner of
theft, and the hunger, thirst and poverty
they create. I give to all beings, in their
infinities, all possible wealth, for both
body and soul. May they find ease with

treasures as vast as the sky And every
wish naturally fulfilled.

Those who know only non-virtuous ways
experience life as an impure realm.
All their acts and blindness I take into me.
I give to all beings, in their infinities,
awakening mind, the ten changes and
other virtues. May they experience life
only as a pure realm, Real Joy and Great
Bliss.

Those who cultivate only ideology and
belief distance themselves from spiritual
principles. All their acts and blindness I
take into me. I give to all beings, in their
infinities, Such virtues as the three kinds
of faith. May they know deeply
within that the results of their actions
can't be avoided and cultivate virtue as
they give up delusion.

Those who know only I and other see
their own projections as an enemy: All
attraction and aversion I take into me. I
give to all beings, in their infinities, the
virtue of the four immeasurables. May
they all come to know in their hearts
Loving kindness, compassion, joy and
equanimity.

A mind that takes its own confusion as
real, the origin of struggle and pain, I take
into me. I give to all beings, in their
infinities, the direct experience of
emptiness and non-self. May they know
directly profound emptiness and come to
complete awakening.

Opening a Path to the Ocean of Awakening Mind

Translated by Ken McLeod

Noble and peerless Infinite Compassion,
And all awakened and awakening beings,
May the truth in the fullness of your intentions
Move all beings, in their infinities,
To the finest in awakening mind.

Those taken over by anger and hate
Are caught in the hell realms of fire and ice.
From all these beings, in their infinities,
I take into me their pain and propensities.
I give them the kindness and love in my heart
And good works totally free of anger.
With lives emptied of anger and hell may they know
A timeless awareness as clear as a mirror,
The vajra potential of Infinite Compassion.

Those taken over by greed and want
Are caught in the ghost realms of hunger and thirst.
From all these beings, in their infinities,
I take into me their pain and propensities.
I give them a mind that knows restraint
And good works not in any way mercenary.
With lives emptied of greed and ghosts may they know
A timeless awareness that knows this from that,
The lotus potential of Infinite Compassion

Those taken over by instinctual functioning
Are caught in the animal realms of reaction and habit.
From all these beings, in their infinities,
I take into me their pain and propensities.
I give them my intelligence, both innate and acquired,
A mind free of instinct and good works, too.
With lives emptied of animals and routines may they know
A timeless awareness that embraces all experience,
The buddha potential of Infinite Compassion.

Those whom jealousy turns inside out
Quarrel and fight in the titan realm.
From all these beings, in their infinities,
I take into me their pain and propensities.
I give them patience in thought, word and deed
And good works free from any grudge.
With lives emptied of titans and strife may they know
A timeless awareness that sees just what to do.
The karma potential of Infinite Compassion,

Those whom arrogance weighs down,
The gods, they struggle with loss and shame.
From all these beings, in their infinities,
I take into me their pain and propensities.
I give them all my hard work and effort,
A mind that knows no pride at all
And good works free from any conceit.
With lives emptied of gods and defeat may they know
A timeless awareness that encompasses balance,
The jewel potential of Infinite Compassion.

Driven by patterns and blindness with no beginning,
Humans follow the rounds of birth, old age, illness and death.
From all these beings, in their infinities,
I take into me their pain and propensities.
I give to them all the virtue I've done
In thought, word and deed from beginningless time.
With lives emptied of toil, sweat and tears may they know
A timeless awareness that is just there on its own,
The untainted presence of Infinite Compassion.

I take into me all failings or faults
In the vows of freedom, awakening and awareness.
The virtue of keeping these three noble vows
I give to all beings, in their infinities.
May they make their three vows utterly pure,
With not even a whiff of failing arising,
And be Vajra Being the union of all potential.

I take into me all acts that shorten life,
Such as murder, sacrilege, or the defacement of shrines.
The virtue of creating holy objects and protecting life
I give to all beings, in their infinities.
May they not even hear of untimely death
And be Vajra Immeasurable Life.

All illness in beings I take into me
Whether from anxiety, apathy, ire or a mix.
Good works that bring comfort and health –
Ending violence or giving medicine –
I give to all beings in their infinities.
May they be Medicine Buddha of lapis blue form
Who dispels all illness throughout the three times.

I take into me robbery and all manner of theft,
And the hunger, thirst and poverty they create.
I give to all beings, in their infinities,
All possible wealth, for both body and soul.
May they find ease with treasures as vast as the sky
And every wish naturally fulfilled.

Those who know only non-virtuous ways
Experience life as an impure realm.
All their acts and blindness I take into me.
I give to all beings, in their infinities,
Awakening mind, the ten changes, and other virtues.
May they experience life only as a pure realm,
Real Joy, for one, or Great Bliss, too.

Those who cultivate only ideology and belief
Distance themselves from spiritual principles.
All their acts and blindness I take into me.
I give to all beings, in their infinities,
Such virtues as the three kinds of faith.
May they know deeply within
That the results of their actions can't be avoided
And cultivate virtue as they give up sin.

Those who know only I and other
See their own projections as an enemy:
All attraction and aversion I take into me.
I give to all beings, in their infinities,
The virtue of the four immeasurables.
May they all come to know in their hearts
Loving kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity.

A mind that takes its own confusion as real,
The origin of struggle and pain, I take into me.
I give to all beings, in their infinities,
The direct experience of emptiness and non-self.
May they know directly profound emptiness
And come to complete awakening.

In summary, to meet what you don't like,
Such as the sixteen threats,

To lose what you do like,
Family, friends, food, wealth or home,
To work at keeping what you do have,
Defeated enemies, protected friends, a livelihood,
To fail in what you strive for,
Power, fortune, fame, respect,
The suffering and struggles of change,
Problems, accidents and the like,
And fixation on self, I take it all in.

All forms of virtue, past, present and future,
Good fortune, power, life, and health,
Without regard, I give to beings.
May all beings be joyous and happy,
And pour their energy into awakening mind.

May all beings who have any connection with me,
From my teaching them, encouraging them in virtue,
Eating their flesh, drinking their milk, or riding them,
Because they have faith and respect me, support me with food or money,
Or because they don't respect, misunderstand or slander me,

Or mug and rob me, hit me, or hate me,
Whatever the connection, through good or evil,
In short, those who see me,
Hear my name, think good or bad of me,
Even those touched by the wind that touched me,
All of them,
May their evil and blindness come to an end.
Then by Infinite Compassion,
May they be drawn to the Realm of Bliss.

May whatever I do in thought, word or deed,
Including even the stench of my body,
Only be helpful to beings.

May those who harm me, in my body or my life,
Whether human or non-human,
Be the first to come to full awakening.

Whoever relies on me even a little
May they never experience the results of evil.

Like a dream, a reflection or a mirage,
When you look, there is nothing here.
The fixation on self fools everyone.

I and all beings, in their infinities,
Whether demonic, crippling or alien,
Are, in the end, the same in emptiness.
Confused is the person who takes what is empty as real.

Relatively, everyone has been a parent to us.
Who in the world is kinder to us
Than our parents?
Confused is the child who hates his own mother.

Therefore, because I recall without reservation
The kindness of beings, my parents,
Profit and victory I give to others.
Loss and defeat I take for myself.

By the power of this unselfish intention
May everyone generate goodness and clarity,
And clear away evil and blindness.
May they happily generate
This treasured intention to awaken,
The unerring path of the victorious ones,
The heart of emptiness and compassion,
And attain the complete knowing of full awakening.

Pali Refuges Tisarana

Refuges in Pali

Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Dutiyampi Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Dutiyampi Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Dutiyampi Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Tatiyampi Buddham Saranam Gacchami
Tatiyampi Dhammam Saranam Gacchami
Tatiyampi Sangham Saranam Gacchami

Three Refuges

I take refuge in Buddha.
I take refuge in Dharma.
I take refuge in Sangha.

I take refuge in Buddha as the perfect teacher.
I take refuge in Dharma as the perfect teaching.
I take refuge in Sangha as the perfect life.

Now I have completely taken refuge in Buddha.
Now I have completely taken refuge in Dharma.
Now I have completely taken refuge in Sangha.

The Refuge Chant

At the foot of the Bodhi tree,
Beautifully seated, peaceful and smiling,
The living source of understanding and compassion,
To the Buddha I go for refuge.
(Bell)

The path of mindful living,
Leading to healing, joy and enlightenment,
The way of peace,
To the Dharma I go for refuge.
(Bell)

The loving and supporting community of practice,
Realizing harmony, awareness, and liberation,
To the Shanghai I go for refuge.
(Bell)

I am aware that the three gems are within my heart.
I vow to realize them.
I vow to practice mindful breathing and smiling,
Looking deeply into things.
I vow to understand living beings and their suffering,
To cultivate compassion and loving kindness,
And to practice joy and equanimity.
(Bell)

I vow to offer joy to one person in the morning
And to help relieve the grief of one person in the afternoon.
I vow to live simply and sanely, content with just a few possessions,
And to keep my body healthy.
I vow to let go of all worries and anxiety
In order to be light and free.
(Bell)

Repentance Chant

All my ancient, twisted karma,
From beginningless greed, hate, and delusion,
Born through body, speech, and mind,
I now fully avow.

ROBE CHANT

How great the Robe of Liberation,

A formless field of merit

Wrapping ourselves in Buddha's teachings

We free all living beings.

Shantideva's Prayer

The evolutionary dedication of the woman or man bodhisattva. The enlightenment hero or heroine is given in the form of a vow. It expresses the resolve you feel as the moment when you first conceive the spirit or soul of enlightenment. It has been recited as a prayer by millions of people over the centuries, in the form given by the great eighth century Buddhist poet Shantideva.

By the virtue amassed by all that I have done,
May the pain of every being be completely healed.
May I be a doctor and medicine, and may I be nurse
For all sick beings in the world, until all are well.
May food and drink rain down to stop all thirst and hunger,
And during times of famine, may I turn myself into food and drink.
May I be an endless treasure for the poor and destitute;
May I turn into all things they could ever need,
And may these then be placed close beside them.
With no sense of loss, may I give up possessions, even my body,
And all past, present and future virtues, to help all beings.
May I be savior for those without one, a guide for all the lost,
A bridge, a ferry, and a ship for all who cross the water.
May I be an island for those who seek one, and a lamp for those desiring light.
May I be a bed for all who wish to rest, and a slave for all who want a slave.
May be a wishing jewel, a magic vase, powerful mantras, and great medicine,
May I become a wish-fulfilling tree, and a cow of plenty for the world.
Til they pass from pain, may I also be the source of life
For all realms of beings to the end of space.
Just as all former Lords of Bliss conceived this enlightened spirit
And progressively performed the Bodhisattva deeds,
So for the sake of all beings, I, too, conceive this enlightened spirit,
And so will I, too, progressively perform these deeds.

Song of the Grass-Roof Hermitage

By Shitou Xiqian

I've built a grass hut where there's nothing of value.
After eating, I relax and enjoy a nap.
When it was completed, fresh weeds appeared.
Now it's been lived in--covered by weeds.
The person in the hut lives here calmly, not stuck to inside, outside, or in-between.
Places worldly people live, he doesn't live.
Realms worldly people love, she doesn't love.
Though the hut is small, it includes the entire world.
In ten feet square, an old man illumines forms and their nature.
A Mahayana bodhisattva trusts without doubt.
The middling or lowly can't help wondering;
Will this hut perish or not?
Perishable or not, the original master is present,
Not dwelling south or north, east or west.
Firmly based on steadiness, it can't be surpassed.
A shining window below the green pines —
Jade palaces or vermilion towers can't compare with it.
Just sitting with head covered all things are at rest.
Thus, this mountain monk doesn't understand at all.
Living here he no longer works to get free.
Who would proudly arrange seats, trying to entice guests?
Turn around the light to shine within, then just return.
The vast inconceivable source can't be faced or turned away from.
Meet the ancestral teachers, be familiar with their instructions,
bind grasses to build a hut, and don't give up.
Let go of hundreds of years and relax completely.

Open your hands and walk, innocent.
Thousands of words, myriad interpretations.
Are only to free you from obstructions.
If you want to know the undying person in the hut,
Don't separate from this skin bag here and now.

Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi

Composed by Tozan Ryokai

The teaching of thusness is intimately communicated by Buddhas and Ancestors. Now you have it; so keep it well.

Filling a silver bowl with snow; hiding a heron in the moonlight. When you array them they're not the same. When you mix them you know where they are.

The meaning is not in the words. Yet it responds to the inquiring impulse. If you're excited, it becomes a pitfall. If you miss it, you fall into retrospective hesitation. Turning away and touching are both wrong for it is like a mass of fire. Just to depict it in literary form is to relegate it to defilement. It is bright just at midnight. It doesn't appear at dawn. It acts as a guide for beings. Its use removes all pains.

Although it is not fabricated it is not without speech. It is like facing a jewel mirror. Form and image behold each other. You are not it. It actually is you.

It is like a babe in the world in five aspects complete. It does not go or come nor rise nor stand. 'Ba ba wa wa': is there anything said or not? Ultimately it does not apprehend anything because its speech is not yet correct.

It is like the six lines of the double split hexagram. The relative and absolute integrate. Piled up they make three. The complete transformation makes five. It is like the taste of the five-flavored herb, like the diamond thunderbolt.

Subtly included with the true, inquiry and response come up together. Communing with the source and communing with the process. It includes integration and includes the road. Merging is auspicious. Do not violate it.

Naturally real yet inconceivable, it is not within the province of delusion or enlightenment. With causal conditions, time, and seasons, quiescently it shines bright. In its fineness it fits into spacelessness. In its greatness it is utterly beyond location. A hairbreadth's deviation will fail to accord with the proper attunement.

Now there are sudden and gradual in connection with which are set up basic approaches. Once basic approaches are distinguished then there are guiding rules. But even though the basis is reached and the approach comprehended, true eternity still flows.

Outwardly still while inwardly moving. Like a tethered colt, a trapped rat, the ancient saints pitied them and bestowed upon them the teaching. According to their delusions they called black as white. When erroneous imaginations cease the acquiescent mind realizes itself.

If you want to conform to the ancient way, please observe the ancients of former times. When about to fulfill the way of Buddhahood, one gazed at a tree for ten aeons. Like a tiger leaving part of its prey, a horse with a white left hind leg.

Because there is the base, there are jewel pedestals, fine clothing. Because there is the startlingly different, there are house cat and cow Yi with his archer's skill could hit a target at a hundred paces. But when arrowpoints meet head on what has this to do with the power of skill?

When the wooden man begins to sing, the stone woman gets up to dance. It's not within reach of feeling or discrimination. How could it admit of consideration in thought?

A minister serves the lord, a son obeys the father. Not obeying is not filial and not serving is no help. Practice secretly, working within as though a fool, like an idiot. If you can achieve continuity, this is called the host-within-the-host.

Tenzo's Prayer

Altar Opening:

In gratitude I acknowledge all tenzos gone before me, after me, and with me now. I request their help, offering incense to them and Buddha.

Pay full attention to all work, the Way-Seeking Mind is actualized by rolling up your sleeves. Attend to every aspect yourself so that it will naturally turn out well. Put things that naturally go on a high place onto a high place and those that would be most stable on a low place onto a low place. In this way stability is established. Keep your mind on your work and do not throw things around carelessly. Do not lose even on grain of rice. All ingredients are the same. Do not let your attitude be influenced by the quality of ingredients. As Master Dogen asked the Tenzo from Ayuwang, "What is practice?" The Tenzo replied: "There is nothing in the world hidden from it."

May all beings benefit from the merits of this practice.

ZAZEN WASAN

(The Song of Zazen) by Hakuin Ekaku Zenji

Sentient beings are primarily all Buddhas. It is like ice and water, apart from water no ice can exist; outside sentient beings, where do we find the Buddhas?

Not knowing how near the Truth is, we seek it far away-what a pity! We are like a man who, in the midst of water, cries in thirst so imploringly; we are like the son of a rich man who wandered away among the poor.

The reason why we transmigrate through the six worlds is that we are lost in the darkness of ignorance; going astray further and further in the darkness, when are we able to be free from birth-and-death?

As for Zazen practice in the Mahayana, we have no words to praise it fully. The virtues of perfection such as charity, morality, and the invocation of the Buddha's name, Confession, and ascetic discipline, and many other good deeds of merit- All these return into THIS! Even those who have practiced it for just one sitting will see all their evil karma erased; nowhere will they find evil paths, But the Pure Land will be near at hand.

With a reverential heart, if we listen to this Truth even once and praise it, and gladly embrace it, we will surely be blessed most infinitely. But, if we concentrate within, and testify to the truth that Self-Nature is no-nature, we have really gone beyond foolish talk.

The gate of the oneness of cause and effect is opened; the path of non-duality and non-trinity runs straight ahead.

To regard the form of no-form as form, Whether going or returning, we cannot be any place else; To regard the thought of no-thought as thought, Whether singing or dancing, we are the voice of the Dharma.

How boundless the cleared sky of Samadhi! How transparent the perfect moonlight of the Fourfold Wisdom! At this moment what more need we seek? As the Truth eternally reveals itself, this very place is the Lotus Land of Purity; this very body is the Body of the Buddha."