

Zen Sutras

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Translations/revisions by **Robert Aitken Roshi**

The Zen Buddhist texts listed below have been translated from Japanese by Robert Aitken Roshi of the Diamond Sangha Zen Buddhist Society, Koko An, 2119 Kaloa Way, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA 96822. They supersede all earlier versions and translations of the Daily Zen Sutras.

PURIFICATION

All the evil karma, ever created by me since of old;
on account of my beginningless greed, hatred and ignorance;
born of my conduct, speech and thought;
I now confess openly and fully.

VANDANA

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.
I venerate the Sacred One, the Great Sage, the Truly Enlightened One.

TI-SARANA

Buddham saranam gaccha-mi
I take refuge in the Buddha
Dhammam saranam gaccha-mi
I take refuge in the Dharma
Sangham saranam gaccha-mi.
I take refuge in the Sangha.

THE GREAT VOWS FOR ALL

Shigu Siegan Mon

Shujo mu hen sei gan do
The many beings are numberless, I vow to save them;
Bonno mu jin sei gan dan
Greed, hatred, and ignorance rise endlessly, I vow to abandon them;
Ho mon mu ryo sei gan gaku
Dharma gates are countless, I vow to wake to them;
Butsu do mu jo sei gan jo
The Buddha's way is unsurpassed, I vow to embody it fully.

ON OPENING THE DHARMA

The Dharma, incomparably profound and minutely subtle,
is rarely encountered, even in hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas;
We now can see it, listen to it, accept and hold it;
May we completely realize the Tathagata's true meaning.

MAKA HANNYA HARAMITA SHIN GYO

The Great Prajna-Paramita Heart Sutra

KAN JI ZAI BO SA GYO- JIN HAN-NYA HA RA MI TA JI
Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, practicing deep Prajna Paramita,
SHO- KEN GO ON KAI KU- DO IS-SAI KU YAKU.
clearly saw that all five skandhas are empty, transforming anguish and distress.
SHA RI SHI SHIKI FU I KU- KU- FU I SHIKI
Shariputra, form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form;
SHIKI SOKU ZE KU- KU- SOKU ZE SHIKI
form is exactly emptiness, emptiness exactly form;
JU SO- GYO- SHIKI YAKU BU NYO ZE
sensation, perception, mental reaction, consciousness are also like this.
SHA RI SHI ZE SHO HO- KU- SO- FU SHO- FU METSU
Sha-riputra, all things are essentially empty-- not born, not destroyed;
FU KU FU JO- FU ZO- FU GEN
not stained, not pure; without loss, without gain.
ZE KO KU- CHU- MU SHIKI MU JU SO- GYO- SHIKI
Therefore in emptiness there is no form, no sensation, perception, mental reaction,
consciousness;
MU GEN-NI BI ZES-SHIN I
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind,
MU SHIKI SHO- KO- MI SOKU HO-
no color, sound, smell, taste, touch, object of thought;
MU GEN KAI NAI SHI MU I SHIKI KAI
no seeing and so on to no thinking;
MU MU MYO- YAKU MU MU MYO- JIN
no ignorance and also no ending of ignorance,
NAI SHI MU RO- SHI YAKU MU RO- SHI JIN
and so on to no old age and death,
and also no ending of old age and death;
MU KU SHU METSU DO-Y
no anguish, cause of anguish, cessation, path;
MU CHI YAKU MU TOKU I MU SHO TOK'KO
no wisdom and no attainment. Since there is nothing to attain,
BO DAI SAT-TA E HAN-NYA HA RA MI TA KO
the Bodhisattva lives by Prajna Paramita,
SHIM-MU KEI GE MU KEI GE KO MU U KU FU
with no hindrance in the mind; no hindrance and therefore no fear;
ON RI IS-SAI TEN DO- MU SO- KU GYO- NE HAN
far beyond delusive thinking, right here is Nirvana.

SAN ZE SHO BUTSU E HAN-NYA HA RA MI TA KO
All Buddhas of past, present, and future live by Prajna Paramita
TOKU A NOKU TA RA SAM-MYAKU SAM-BO DAI
attaining Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.
KO CHI HAN-NYA HA RA MI TA
Therefore know that Prajna Paramita
ZE DAI JIN SHU ZE DAI MYO- SHU
is the great sacred mantra, the great vivid mantra,
ZE MU JO- SHU ZE MU TO- TO- SHU
the unsurpassed mantra, the supreme mantra,
NO- JO IS-SAI KU SHIN JITSU FU KO
which completely removes all anguish.
This is truth not mere formality.
KO SETSU HAN-MYA HA RA MI TA SHU
Therefore set forth the Prajna Paramita mantra,
SOKU SETSU SHU WATSU
set forth this mantra and proclaim:
GYA TEI GYA TEI HA RA GYA TEI HARA SO- GYA TEI
BO JI SOWA KA HAN-NYA SHIN GYO
Gate gate paragate parasamgate Bodhi sva-ha-!

SHO- SAI MYO- KICHIJO- DARANI

(repeat 3 times)

NO MO SAN MAN DA MOTO NAN
OHA RA CHI KOTO SHA SONO NAN
TO JI TO EN GYA GYA GYA KI GYA KI UN NUN
SHIFU RA SHIFU RA HARA SHIFU RA HARA SHIFU RA
CHISHU SA CHISHU SA SHUSHI RI SHUSHI RI
SOHA JA SOHA JA SEN CHI GYA SHIRI E SOMO KO

FIRST SUTRA SERVICE DEDICATION

Buddha nature pervades the whole universe, existing right here now.
With our reciting of Maka Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo-
(The Great Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra) and the Sho- Sai Myo- Kichijo- Darani,
let us unite with:
The Ancient Seven Buddhas, Dai Osho-,
Shakyamuni Buddha, Dai Osho-,
Bodhidharma, Dai Osho-,
To-zan Ryo-kai, Dai Osho-,
Do-gen Kigen, Dai Osho-,
Keizan Jo-kin, Dai Osho-,
Dai'un Sogaku, Dai Osho-,
Haku'un Ryo-ko-, Dai Osho-,
Ko-un Zenshin, Dai Osho-;

all founding teachers, past, present, future, Dai Osho-,
let true Dharma continue, Sangha relations become complete:
All Buddhas throughout space and time,
all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
the great Prajna Paramita.

EARLY MORNING SERVICE DEDICATION

Our words ring out through space beyond the stars;
their virtue and compassion echo back from all the many beings;
we recite the Maka Hanya Haramita Shin Gyo- (Prajna-Paramita Heart Sutra) and the Sho-
Sai Myo- Kichijo- Darani
for renewal of the Buddha-mind in fields and forests, homes and streets,
throughout the world, in grateful thanks to all our many guides along the ancient way;
All Buddhas throughout space and time;
all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;
the great Prajna Paramita.

TOREI ZENJI: BODHISATTVA'S VOW

Leader:

I am only a simple disciple, but I offer these respectful words:

Assembly:

When I regard the true nature of the many dharmas,
I find them all to be sacred forms of the Tathagata's never-failing essence.
Each particle of matter, each moment,
is no other than the Tathagata's inexpressible radiance.
With this realization, our virtuous ancestors gave tender care
to beasts and birds with compassionate minds and hearts.
Among us, in our own daily lives, who is not reverently grateful for the protections of life:
food, drink, and clothing! Though they are inanimate things,
they are nonetheless the warm flesh and blood, the merciful incarnations of Buddha.
All the more, we can be especially sympathetic and affectionate with foolish people,
particularly with someone who becomes a sworn enemy and persecutes us with abusive
language.
That very abuse conveys the Buddha's boundless loving-kindness.
It is a compassionate device to liberate us entirely from the mean-spirited delusions
we have built up with our wrongful conduct from the beginningless past.
With our open response to such abuse we completely relinquish ourselves,
and the most profound and pure faith arises.
At the peak of each thought a lotus flower opens, and on each flower there is revealed a
Buddha.
Everywhere is the Pure Land in its beauty.
We see fully the Tathagata's radiant light right where we are.
May we retain this mind and extend it throughout the world
so that we and all beings become mature in Buddha's wisdom.

EMMEI JIKKU KANNON GYO

Ten Verse Kannon Sutra of Timeless Life

(repeat 7 times)

KANZEON

Kanzeon!

NAMU BUTSU

I venerate the Buddha;

YO BUTSU U IN

with the Buddha I have my source,

YO BUTSU U EN

with the Buddha I have affinity--

BUP-PO- SO- EN

affinity with Buddha, Dharma, Sangha,

JO- RAKU GA JO-

constancy, ease, the self, and purity.

CHO- NEN KANZEON

Mornings my thought is Kanzeon,

BO- NEN KANZEON

evenings my thought is Kanzeon,

NEN NEN JU- SHIN KI

thought after thought arises in mind,

NEN NEN FU RI SHIN.

thought after thought is not separate from mind.

SECOND SUTRA SERVICE DEDICATION

The Buddha and his teachers and his many sons and daughters
turn the Dharma wheel to show the wisdom of the stones and clouds;
we dedicate the virtues of reciting Torei Zenji's

Bodhisattvas's Vow and the Emmei Jikku Kannon Gyo- to:

Cho-ro Nyogen, Dai Osho-,

Hannya Gempo, Dai Osho-,

Mitta So-en, Dai Osho-,

and to our relatives and companions of the past who rest in deepest samadhi;

All Buddhas throughout space and time;

all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;

the great Prajna Paramita.

EVENING DEDICATION

Infinite realms of light and dark convey the Buddha Mind; birds and trees and stars and we
ourselves come forth in perfect harmony;

we recite our gatha and our sutra for the many beings of the world;

in grateful thanks to all our many guides along the ancient way:

All Buddhas throughout space and time

all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;

the great Prajna Paramita.

HAKUIN ZENJI - SONG OF ZAZEN

(Dharma poem by Hakuin Ekaku [1685-1768]. Read as part of the ceremony at the end of the day during sesshin.)

All beings by nature are Buddha,
as ice by nature is water;
apart from water there is no ice,
apart from beings no Buddha.
How sad that people ignore the near
and search for truth afar,
like someone in the midst of water
crying out in thirst,
like a child of a wealthy home
wandering among the poor.
Lost on dark paths of ignorance
we wander through the six worlds,
from dark path to dark path we wander,
when shall we be freed from birth and death?
For this the zazen of the Mahayana
deserves the highest praise:
offerings, precepts, paramitas,
Nembutsu, atonement, training--
the many other virtues--
all rise within zazen.
Even those with proud attainments
wipe away immeasurable crimes--
where are all the dark paths then?
the Pure Land itself is not far.
Those who hear this truth even once
and listen with a grateful heart,
treasuring it, revering it,
gain blessings without end.
Much more, if you dedicate yourself
and confirm your own self-nature--
that self-nature is no nature--
you are far beyond mere argument.
The oneness of cause and effect is clear,
not two, not three, the path is put right;
with form that is no form
going and coming--never astray,
with thought that is no thought
singing and dancing are the voice of the Law.
Boundless and free is the sky of samadhi,
bright the full moon of wisdom,
truly is anything missing now?
Nirvana is here, before your eyes,

this very place is the Lotus Land,
this very body the Buddha.

EVENING CEREMONY DEDICATION

The sky of samadhi and the moonlight of wisdom
form the temple of our practice;
our friends and family members guide us
as we walk the ancient path;
we dedicate the virtues of reciting Hakuin Zenji's Song of Zazen to:
Rinzai Gigen Dai Osho-
Hakuin Ekaku Dai Osho-
and to the guardians of the Dharma and the protectors of our sacred hall;
All Buddhas throughout space and time;
all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;
the great Prajna Paramita.

THE EVENING MESSAGE

(Called out from just outside the do-jo- during the ceremony at the end of each day of sesshin.)

I beg to urge you everyone:
life and death is a grave matter;
all things pass quickly away.
Each of you must be completely alert;
never neglectful, never indulgent.

SESSHIN-ENDING DEDICATION

In the purity and clarity of the Dharmakaya, in the fullness and perfection of the Sambogkaya,
in the infinite variety of the Nirmanakaya, we dedicate our sesshin and our reciting of Maka
Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo- to:
The Ancient Seven Buddhas, Dai Osho-
Shakyamuni Buddha, Dai Osho-
All Founding Teachers, past, present, future, Dai Osho-;
and for the enlightenment of bushes and grasses and the many beings of the world;
All Buddhas throughout space and time;
all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas;
the great Prajna Paramita.

THE THREE VOWS OF REFUGE

(The Assembly Response is from a traditional Soto Zen Buddhist work that was revised by Do-gen Kigen under the title, Kyo-ju-kaimon, Doctrine of Jukai. Initiates take turns reading their vows, beginning with the one sitting at the left-front corner facing the altar. With each response they repeat the traditional vow, and then they read the words they have composed as their own vow.)

Roshi: The Three Vows of Refuge.

Assembly: The Great Precepts of all the Buddhas have been maintained and protected by all the Buddhas. Buddhas hand them down to Buddhas, and Ancestral Teachers hand them down to Ancestral Teachers. Acceptance and observance of the Precepts transcends past, present, and future, and form the perfect accord in realization between teacher and disciple, continuing through all ages.

Our great teacher Shakyamuni Buddha imparted them to Mahakashyapa, and Mahakashyapa transmitted them to Ananda. Already the Precepts have passed through many generations in direct succession, reaching down to the present head of this temple.

Now, receiving the Great Precepts, I vow to requite my deep obligation to the Buddhas and Ancestral Teachers. I pledge to establish these Precepts as essential teachings for human beings and other beings so that all will inherit the wisdom of the Buddha.

Roshi: I take refuge in the Buddha.

Initiate:: I take refuge in the Buddha....

Roshi: I take refuge in the Dharma.

Initiate:: I take refuge in the Dharma....

Roshi: I take refuge in the Sangha.

Initiate:: I take refuge in the Sangha....

THE THREE PURE PRECEPTS

(The Assembly responses are from the Kyo-ju-kaimon.)

Roshi: The Three Pure Precepts.

I vow to maintain the Precepts.

Initiate:: I vow to maintain the Precepts....

Assembly: This is the cave whence all dharmas of all Buddhas arise.

Roshi: I vow to practice all good dharmas.

Initiate:: I vow to practice all good dharmas....

Assembly: This is the path of fulfilled enlightenment.

Roshi: I vow to save the many beings.

Initiate:: I vow to save the many beings....

Assembly: Transcending profane and holy, I liberate myself and others.

THE TEN GRAVE PRECEPTS

(The first Assembly Responses to the Precepts are comments attributed to Bodhidharma from the book, I-hsin Chieh-men (Isshin Kaimon, The Precepts of One Mind), and the second is from the Kyo-ju-kaimon.)

Roshi: The Ten Grave Precepts.

I take up the Way of Not Killing.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the everlasting Dharma, not giving rise to the idea of killing is called the Precept of Not Killing.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Killing....

Assembly: The Buddha seed grows in accordance with not taking life. Transmit the life of Buddha's wisdom and do not kill.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Stealing.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the unattainable Dharma, not having thoughts of gaining is called the Precept of Not Stealing.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Stealing....

Assembly: The self and things of the world are just as they are. The gate of emancipation is open.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Misusing Sex.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the ungilded Dharma, not creating a veneer of attachment is called the Precept of Not Misusing Sex.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Misusing Sex....

Assembly: The Three Wheels are pure and clear. When you have nothing to desire, you follow the way of all Buddhas.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Speaking Falsely.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the inexplicable Dharma, not preaching a single word is called the Precept of Not Speaking Falsely.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Speaking Falsely....

Assembly: The Dharma wheel turns from the beginning. There is neither surplus nor lack. The whole universe is moistened with nectar, and the truth is ready to harvest.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Giving or Taking Drugs.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the intrinsically pure Dharma, not giving rise to delusions is called the Precept of Not Giving or Taking Drugs.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Giving or Taking Drugs....

Assembly: Drugs are not brought in yet. Don't let them invade. That is the great light.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Discussing Faults of Others.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the flawless Dharma, not expounding upon error is called the Precept of Not Discussing Faults of Others.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Discussing Faults of Others....

Assembly: In the Buddha Dharma, there is one path, one Dharma, one realization, one practice. Don't permit fault- finding. Don't permit haphazard talk.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Praising Myself while Abusing Others.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the equitable Dharma, not dwelling upon I against you is called the Precept of Not Praising Myself while Abusing Others.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Praising Myself while Abusing Others....

Assembly: Buddhas and Ancestral Teachers realize the empty sky and the great earth. When they manifest the noble body, there is neither inside nor outside in emptiness. When they manifest the Dharma body, there is not even a bit of earth on the ground.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Sparing the Dharma Assets.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the genuine, all-pervading Dharma, not being stingy about a single thing is called the Precept of Not Sparing the Dharma Assets.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Sparing the Dharma Assets....

Assembly: One phrase, one verse--that is the ten thousand things and one hundred grasses; one dharma, one realization-- that is all Buddhas and Ancestral Teachers. Therefore from the beginning, there has been no stinginess at all.

Roshi: I take up the way of not indulging in anger.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the selfless Dharma, not contriving reality for the self is called the Precept of Not Indulging in Anger.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Indulging in Anger....

Assembly: Not advancing, not retreating, not real, not empty. There is an ocean of bright clouds. There is an ocean of solemn clouds.

Roshi: I take up the Way of Not Defaming the Three Treasures.

Assembly: Self-nature is subtle and mysterious. In the realm of the One, not holding dualistic concepts of ordinary beings and sages is called the Precept of Not Defaming the Three Treasures.

Initiate:: I take up the Way of Not Defaming the Three Treasures....

Assembly: The teisho of the actual body is the harbor and the weir. This is the most important thing in the world. Its virtue finds its home in the ocean of essential nature. It is beyond explanation. We just accept it with respect and gratitude.

VERSE OF THE RAKUSU

(Recited by the assembly at dawn when the priests put on the kesa, their ceremonial robe, and lay people their rakusu, the small apron-like garment that symbolizes the Buddha's robe. It is also murmured privately when putting on the garment at other times.)

I wear the robe of liberation,
the formless field of benefaction,
the teachings of the Tathagata,
saving all the many beings.

JUKAI DEDICATION

At Magadha, at this very place,
Deep into the sacred ground,
high into the empty sky,
broadly shading living things
the tree of wisdom thrives
by rain and soil and sunshine
and by your loving care that we maintain.
We dedicate the Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra, our ceremony of Jukai and ourselves to you,
Shakyamuni Buddha Dai Osho-,
we celebrate your sacred presence,
your boundless understanding, and your love.
Let your true Dharma continue,
and your Sangha relations become complete.
All Buddhas throughout space and time;
all Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
the great Prajna Paramita.

VERSE OF THE HAN

(Incised on the han at Koko An)

Completely freed from yes and no;
great emptiness charged within;
no questions, no answers;
like a fish, like a fool.

MEAL SUTRAS

Buddha, born at Kapilavastu,
Attained the Way at Magadha,
Preached at Varanashi,
Entered Nirvana at Kushinagara.
Now as we spread the bowls of the Buddha Tathagatha we make our vows together with all
beings; we and this food and our eating are vacant,

We take refuge in the Three Treasures,
Remembering our many honored guides
with gratitude for their gifts of wisdom.

Vairochana, pure and clear Dharmakaya Buddha;
Lochana, full and complete Sambogakaya Buddha;
Shakyamuni, infinitely varied Nirmanakaya Buddha;
Maitreya, Buddha still to be born;
All Buddhas Everywhere, past, present, future;
Mahayana Lotus of the Subtle Law Sutra
Manjushri, Great Wisdom Bodhisattva;
Samantabhadra, Great Action Bodhisattva;
Avalokiteshvara, Great Compassion Bodhisattva;
all venerated Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
the Great Prajna Paramita.

Porridge is effective in ten ways
To aid the student of Zen.
No limit to the good result,
Consummating eternal happiness.

These three virtues and six flavors
Are offered to the Buddha and Sangha;
May all being of the universe
Share alike this nourishment.

First, we consider in detail the merit of this food and remember how it came to us;
Second, we evaluate our own virtue and practice, Lacking or complete, as we receive this
offering;
Third, we are careful about greed, hatred, and ignorance, to guard our minds and to free

ourselves from error;
Fourth, we take this good medicine to save our bodies from emaciation;
Fifth, we accept this food to achieve the Way of the Buddha.

Oh, all you hungry ghosts
We now offer this food to you;
May all of you everywhere
Share it with us together.

The first portion is for the Three Treasures,
The second is for the Four Blessings
The third is for the Six Paths;
Together with all we take this food.
The first taste is to cut off all evil
The second is to practice all good,
The third is to save all beings
May we all attain the Way of the Buddha.

We wash our bowls in this water;
It has the flavor of ambrosial dew;
We offer it to all hungry ghosts;
May all be filled and satisfied.

The world is like an empty sky;
The lotus does not adhere to water
Our minds surpass that in purity;
We bow in veneration to the most exalted one.

VERSE FOR INFORMAL MEALS

(This may be a translation of a Far Eastern gatha. There are several English variations.)

We venerate the Three Treasures
and are thankful for this meal,
the work of many people
and the sharing of other forms of life.

SHODOKA

CHENG-TAO-KO [Zhengdaoge], Shodoka (J.), Song of Enlightenment. - a collection of 64 verses from the T'ang Dynasty China, attributed to the Zen Master Yung-chia Hsuan-chueh [Yongjia Xuanjue], aka Yoka Genkaku (J.) (665-713), and presenting the basic tenets of the Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism.

There is the leisurely one,
Walking the Tao, beyond philosophy,
Not avoiding fantasy, not seeking truth.

The real nature of ignorance is the Buddha-nature itself;
The empty delusory body is the very body of the Dharma.

When the Dharma body awakens completely,
There is nothing at all.
The source of our self-nature
Is the Buddha of innocent truth.
Mental and physical reactions come and go
Like clouds in the empty sky;
Greed, hatred, and ignorance appear and disappear
Like bubbles on the surface of the sea.

When we realize actuality,
There is no distinction between mind and thing
And the path to hell instantly vanishes.
If this is a lie to fool the world,
My tongue may be cut out forever.

Once we awaken to the Tathagata-Zen,
The six noble deeds and the ten thousand good actions
Are already complete within us.
In our dream we see the six levels of illusion clearly;
After we awaken the whole universe is empty.

No bad fortune, no good fortune, no loss, no gain;
Never seek such things in eternal serenity.
For years the dusty mirror has gone uncleaned,
Now let us polish it completely, once and for all.

Who has no-thought? Who is not-born?
If we are truly not-born,
We are not un-born either.
Ask a robot if this is not so.
How can we realize ourselves
By virtuous deeds or by seeking the Buddha?

Release your hold on earth, water, fire, wind;
Drink and eat as you wish in eternal serenity.
All things are transient and completely empty;
This is the great enlightenment of the Tathagata.

Transience, emptiness and enlightenment --
These are the ultimate truths of Buddhism;
Keeping and teaching them is true Sangha devotion.
If you don't agree, please ask me about it.
Cut out directly the root of it all, --
This is the very point of the Buddha-seal.
I can't respond to any concern about leaves and branches.

People do not recognize the Mani-jewel.
Living intimately within the Tathagata-garbha,
It operates our sight, hearing, smell, taste, sensation, awareness;
And all of these are empty, yet not empty.

The rays shining from this perfect Mani-jewel
Have the form of no form at all.
Clarify the five eyes and develop the five powers;
This is not intellectual work, -- just realize, just know.
It is not difficult to see images in a mirror,
But who can take hold of the moon in the water?

Always working alone, always walking alone,
The enlightened one walks the free way of Nirvana
With melody that is old and clear in spirit
And naturally elegant in style,
But with body that is tough and bony,
Passing unnoticed in the world.

We know that Shakyas' sons and daughters
Are poor in body, but not in the Tao.
In their poverty, they always wear ragged clothing,
But they have the jewel of no price treasured within.

This jewel of no price can never be used up
Though they spend it freely to help people they meet.
Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya,
And the four kinds of wisdom
Are all contained within.
The eight kinds of emancipation and the six universal powers
Are all impressed on the ground of their mind.

The best student goes directly to the ultimate,
The others are very learned but their faith is uncertain.
Remove the dirty garments from your own mind;
Why should you show off your outward striving?

Some may slander, some may abuse;
They try to set fire to the heavens with a torch
And end by merely tiring themselves out.
I hear their scandal as though it were ambrosial truth;
Immediately everything melts
And I enter the place beyond thought and words.

When I consider the virtue of abusive words,
I find the scandal-monger is my good teacher.
If we do not become angry at gossip,
We have no need for powerful endurance and compassion.
To be mature in Zen is to be mature in expression,
And full-moon brilliance of dhyana and prajna

Does not stagnate in emptiness.
Not only can I take hold of complete enlightenment by myself,
But all Buddha-bodies, like sands of the Ganges,
Can become awakened in exactly the same way.

The incomparable lion-roar of doctrine
Shatters the brains of the one hundred kinds of animals.
Even the king of elephants will run away, forgetting his pride;
Only the heavenly dragon listens calmly, with pure delight.

I wandered over rivers and seas, crossing mountains and streams,
Visiting teachers, asking about the Way in personal interviews;
Since I recognized the Sixth Founding Teacher at Ts'ao Ch'i,
I know what is beyond the relativity of birth and death.

Walking is Zen, sitting is Zen;
Speaking or silent, active or quiet, the essence is at peace.
Even facing the sword of death, our mind is unmoved;
Even drinking poison, our mind is quiet.

Our teacher, Shakyamuni, met Dipankara Buddha
And for many eons he trained as Kshanti, the ascetic.
Many births, many deaths;
I am serene in this cycle,--there is no end to it.

Since I abruptly realized the unborn,
I have had no reason for joy or sorrow
At any honor or disgrace.

I have entered the deep mountains to silence and beauty;
In a profound valley beneath high cliffs,
I sit under the old pine trees.
Zazen in my rustic cottage
Is peaceful, lonely, and truly comfortable.

When you truly awaken,
You have no formal merit.
In the multiplicity of the relative world,
You cannot find such freedom.
Self-centered merit brings the joy of heaven itself,
But it is like shooting an arrow at the sky;
When the force is exhausted, it falls to the earth,
And then everything goes wrong.

Why should this be better
Than the true way of the absolute,
Directly penetrating the ground of Tathagata?

Just take hold of the source
And never mind the branches.

It is like a treasure-moon
Enclosed in a beautiful emerald.
Now I understand this Mani-jewel
And my gain is the gain of everyone endlessly.

The moon shines on the river,
The wind blows through the pines,--
Whose providence is this long beautiful evening?
The Buddha-nature jewel of morality
Is impressed on the ground of my mind,
And my robe is the dew, the fog, the cloud, and the mist.

A bowl once calmed dragons
And a staff separated fighting tigers;
The rings on this staff jingle musically.
The form of these expressions is not to be taken lightly;
The treasure-staff of the Tathagata
Has left traces for us to follow.

The awakened one does not seek truth--
Does not cut off delusion.
Truth and delusion are both vacant and without form,
But this no-form is neither empty nor not empty;
It is the truly real form of the Tathagata.

The mind-mirror is clear, so there are no obstacles.
Its brilliance illuminates the universe
To the depths and in every grain of sand.
Multitudinous things of the cosmos
Are all reflected in the mind,
And this full clarity is beyond inner and outer.

To live in nothingness is to ignore cause and effect;
This chaos leads only to disaster.
The one who clings to vacancy, rejecting the world of things,
Escapes from drowning but leaps into fire.

Holding truth and rejecting delusion--
These are but skillful lies.
Students who do zazen by such lies
Love thievery in their own children.

They miss the Dharma-treasure;
They lose accumulated power;
And this disaster follows directly upon dualistic thinking.
So Zen is the complete realization of mind,
The complete cutting off of delusion,
The power of wise vision penetrating directly to the unborn.

Students of vigorous will hold the sword of wisdom;
The prajna edge is a diamond flame.
It not only cuts off useless knowledge,
But also exterminates delusions.

They roar with Dharma-thunder;
They strike the Dharma-drum;
They spread clouds of love, and pour ambrosial rain.
Their giant footsteps nourish limitless beings;
Sravaka, Pratyeka, Bodhisattva--all are enlightened;
Five kinds of human nature all are emancipated.

High in the Himalayas, only fei-ni grass grows.
Here cows produce pure and delicious milk,
And this food I continually enjoy.
One complete nature passes to all natures;
One universal Dharma encloses all Dharmas.

One moon is reflected in many waters;
All the water-moons are from the one moon.
The Dharma-body of all Buddhas has entered my own nature, And my nature becomes one
with the Tathagata.

One level completely contains all levels;
It is not matter, mind nor activity.
In an instant eighty-thousand teachings are fulfilled;
In a twinkling the evil of eons is destroyed.

All categories are no category;
What relation have these to my insight?
Beyond praise, beyond blame, --
Like space itself it has no bounds.

Right here it is eternally full and serene,
If you search elsewhere, you cannot see it.
You cannot grasp it, you cannot reject it;
In the midst of not gaining,
In that condition you gain it.

It speaks in silence,
In speech you hear its silence.
The great way has opened and there are no obstacles.
If someone asks, what is your sect
And how do you understand it?
I reply, the power of tremendous prajna.

People say it is positive;
People say it is negative;
But they do not know.
A smooth road, a rough road --

Even heaven cannot imagine.
I have continued my zazen for many eons;
I do not say this to confuse you.

I raise the Dharma-banner and set forth our teaching;
It is the clear doctrine of the Buddha
vWhich I found with my teacher, Hui Neng,
Mahakashyapa became the Buddha-successor,
Received the lamp and passed it on.
Twenty-eight generations of teachers in India,
Then over seas and rivers to our land
Bodhi Dharma came as our own first founder,
And his robe, as we all know, passed through six teachers here,
And how many generations to come may gain the path,
No one knows.

The truth is not set forth;
The false is basically vacant.
Put both existence and non-existence aside,
Then even non-vacancy is vacant,
The twenty kinds of vacancy have no basis,
And the oneness of the Tathagata-being
Is naturally sameness.

Mind is the base, phenomena are dust;
Yet both are like a flaw in the mirror.
When the flaw is brushed aside,
The light begins to shine.
When both mind and phenomena are forgotten,
Then we become naturally genuine.

Ah, the degenerate materialistic world!
People are unhappy; they find self-control difficult.
In the centuries since Shakyamuni, false views are deep,
Demons are strong, the Dharma is weak, disturbances are many.

People hear the Buddha's doctrine of immediacy,
And if they accept it, the demons will be crushed
As easily as a roofing tile.
But they cannot accept, what a pity!

Your mind is the source of action;
Your body is the agent of calamity;
No pity nor blame to anyone else.
If you don't seek an invitation to hell,
Never slander the Tathagata's true teaching.

In the sandalwood forest, there is no other tree.
Only the lion lives in such deep luxuriant woods,

Wandering freely in a state of peace.
Other animals and birds stay far away.

Just baby lions follow the parent,
And three-year-olds already roar loudly.
How can the jackal pursue the king of the Dharma
Even with a hundred-thousand demonic arts?

The Buddha's doctrine of directness
Is not a matter for human emotion.
If you doubt this or feel uncertain,
Then you must discuss it with me.
This is not the free rein of a mountain monk's ego.
I fear your training may lead to wrong views
Of permanent soul or complete extinction.

Being is not being; non-being is not non-being;
Miss this rule by a hair,
And you are off by a thousand miles.
Understanding it, the dragon-child abruptly attains Buddhahood;
Misunderstanding it, the greatest scholar falls into hell.

From my youth I piled studies upon studies,
In sutras and sastras I searched and researched,
Classifying terms and forms, oblivious to fatigue.
I entered the sea to count the sands in vain
And then the Tathagata scolded me kindly
As I read "What profit in counting your neighbor's treasure?"
My work had been scattered and entirely useless,
For years I was dust blown by the wind.

If the seed-nature is wrong, misunderstandings arise,
And the Buddha's doctrine of immediacy cannot be attained.
Shravaka and Pratyeka students may study earnestly
But they lack aspiration.
Others may be very clever,
But they lack prajna.

Stupid ones, childish ones,
They suppose there is something in an empty fist.
They mistake the pointing finger for the moon.
They are idle dreamers lost in form and sensation.

Not supposing something is the Tathagata.
This is truly called Kwan-Yin, the Bodhisattva who sees freely.
When awakened we find karmic hindrances fundamentally empty.
But when not awakened, we must repay all our debts.

The hungry are served a king's repast,
And they cannot eat.

The sick meet the king of doctors;
Why don't they recover?
The practice of Zen in this greedy world --
This is the power of wise vision.
The lotus lives in the midst of the fire;
It is never destroyed.

Pradhanashura broke the gravest precepts;
But he went on to realize the unborn.
The Buddhahood he attained in that moment
Lives with us now in our time.

The incomparable lion roar of the doctrine!
How sad that people are stubbornly ignorant;
Just knowing that crime blocks enlightenment,
Not seeing the secret of the Tathagata teaching.

Two monks were guilty of murder and carnality.
Their leader, Upali, had the light of a glow-worm;
He just added to their guilt.
Vimalakirti cleared their doubts at once
As sunshine melts the frost and snow.

The remarkable power of emancipation
Works wonders innumerable as the sands of the Ganges.
To this we offer clothing, food, bedding, medicine.
Ten thousand pieces of gold are not sufficient;
Though you break your body
And your bones become powder, --
This is not enough for repayment.
One vivid word surpasses millions of years of practice.

The King of the Dharma deserves our highest respect.
Tathagatas, innumerable as sands of the Ganges,
All prove this fact by their attainment.
Now I know what the Mani-jewel is:
Those who believe this will gain it accordingly.

When we see truly, there is nothing at all.
There is no person; there is no Buddha.
Innumerable things of the universe
Are just bubbles on the sea.
Wise sages are all like flashes of lightning

However the burning iron ring revolves around my head,
With bright completeness of dhyana and prajna
I never lose my equanimity.
If the sun becomes cold, and the moon hot,
Evil cannot shatter the truth.

The carriage of the elephant moves like a mountain,
How can the mantis block the road?

The great elephant does not loiter on the rabbit's path.
Great enlightenment is not concerned with details.
Don't belittle the sky by looking through a pipe.
If you still don't understand,
I will settle it for you.