

Nebraska Zen Center

Sutra Book

2023

Verse of the Robe

(1x) Dai sai geda-puku
Musō fuku den e
Hi bu nyorai kyo
Ko do shoshu jo

(2x) Great robe of liberation
A formless field of merit
Wrapping ourselves in Buddha's teaching
We free all living beings

All Buddhas

- Ō All buddhas throughout space and time
- Ō All honored ones, bodhisattvas, mahasattvas
- Ō Wisdom beyond wisdom ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Maha prajna paramita.

Universal Dedication

May this merit extend universally to all
So that we with all living beings
Realize the Buddha way together.--\✓--

Repentance Verse

- ▲ All my past and harmful karma ॐ
Born from beginningless greed, hate, and delusion
Through body, speech, and mind •
I now fully avow

Three Refuges Verse

- ▲ I take refuge in Buddha ॐ
May all beings embody the Great Way •
Resolving to awaken
- ▲ I take refuge in Dharma ॐ
May all beings deeply enter the sutras •
Wisdom like an ocean
- ▲ I take refuge in Sangha ॐ
May all beings support harmony in the community •
Free from hindrance

Four Vows

- ▲ Beings are numberless; ॐ I vow to free 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 realize it ▲

▲ ■ *Heart of Great Perfect Wisdom Sutra*

Õ Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, when deeply practicing prajna paramita, clearly saw that Õ all five aggregates are empty and thus relieved all suffering.

Shariputra, form does not differ from emptiness, emptiness does not differ from form. Form itself is emptiness, emptiness itself form. Sensations, perceptions, formations and consciousness are also like this. Shariputra, all dharmas are marked by emptiness; they neither arise nor cease, are neither defiled nor pure, neither increase nor decrease. Therefore, given emptiness, there is no form, no sensation, no perception, no formation, no consciousness; no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no sight, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of mind; no realm of sight . . . no realm of mind consciousness. There is neither ignorance nor extinction of ignorance . . . neither old age and death nor extinction of old age and death; no suffering, no cause, no cessation, no path, no knowledge and no attainment. With nothing to attain, a bodhisattva relies on prajna paramita Õ and thus the mind is without hindrance. Without hindrance, there is no fear. Far beyond all inverted views, one realizes nirvana. All buddhas of past, present, and future rely on prajna paramita Õ and thereby attain unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. Therefore, know the prajna paramita as the great miraculous mantra, the great bright mantra, the supreme mantra, the incomparable mantra, which removes all suffering and is true, not false. Therefore we proclaim the prajna paramita mantra, the mantra that says: “Gate, Gate, • Paragate, Parasamgate • Bodhi Svaha.” ▲

▲ *Harmony of Difference and Sameness*

Ō The mind of the great sage of India is intimately transmitted from west to east. While human faculties are sharp or dull, the Way has no northern or southern ancestors. Ō The spiritual source shines clear in the light; the branching streams flow on in the dark. Grasping at things is surely delusion; according with sameness is still not enlightenment. All the objects of the senses interact and yet do not. Interacting brings involvement; otherwise, each keeps its place. Sights vary in quality and form, sounds differ as pleasing or harsh. Refined and common speech come together in the dark, clear and murky phrases are distinguished in the light. The four elements return to their natures just as a child turns to its mother. Fire heats, wind moves, water wets, earth is solid. Eye and sights, ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes; thus with each and every thing depending on these roots, the leaves spread forth. Trunk and branches share the essence; revered and common, each has its speech. In the light there is darkness, but don't take it as darkness; in the dark there is light, but don't see it as light. Light and dark oppose one another like the front and back foot in walking. Ō Each of the myriad things has its merit, expressed according to function and place. Phenomena exist like box and lid fit. Principle responds like arrow points meet. Hearing the words, understand the meaning; don't set up standards of your own. Ō If you don't understand the Way right before you, how will you know the path as you walk? Progress is not a matter of far or near, but if you are confused, mountains and rivers block your way. ● I respectfully urge you who study the mystery, ● do not pass your days and night in vain. ▲

▲ *Song of the Jewel Mirror Samadhi*

Õ The dharma of thusness is intimately transmitted by buddhas and ancestors; now you have it—preserve it well. Õ A silver bowl filled with snow; a heron hiding in the moonlight. Taken as similar, they are not the same; not distinguished, their places are known. The meaning does not reside in the words, but a pivotal moment brings it forth. Move and you are trapped; miss and you fall into doubt and vacillation.

Turning away and touching are both wrong, for it is like a massive fire. Just to portray it in literary form is to stain it with defilement. In darkest night it is perfectly clear; in the light of dawn it is hidden. It is a standard for all things; its use removes all suffering. Although it is not constructed, it is not beyond words.

Like facing a jeweled mirror, form and reflection behold each other. You are not it but in truth it is you. Like a newborn child, endowed with five aspects: No going, no coming, no arising, no abiding; “baba wawa”—is anything said or not? In the end it says nothing, for the words are not yet right. In the hexagram “double fire,” when the main and subsidiary lines are transposed, piled up they become three; the permutations make five. Like the taste of the five-flavored herb, like the five-pronged vajra.

Wondrously embraced within the complete, drumming and singing begin together. Penetrate the source and travel the pathways; embrace the territory and treasure the roads. You would do well to respect this; do not neglect it. Natural and wondrous, it is not a matter of delusion or enlightenment. Within causes and conditions, time

and season, it is serene and illuminating. So minute it enters where there is no gap, so vast it transcends dimension.

A hairsbreadth deviation and you are out of tune. Now there are sudden and gradual, in which teachings and approaches arise. With teachings and approaches distinguished, each has its standard. Whether teachings and approaches are mastered or not, reality constantly flows. Outwardly still and inwardly trembling, like tethered colts or cowering rats, the ancient sages grieved for them, and offered them the dharma. Led by their inverted views, they took black for white. When inverted thinking stops, the affirming mind naturally accords.

If you want to follow in the ancient tracks, please observe the sages of the past. One on the verge of realizing the Buddha way contemplated a tree for ten kalpas, 〇 like a battle-scarred tiger, like a horse with shanks gone grey. Because some are vulgar, jeweled tables and ornate robes; because some are wide-eyed, cats and white oxen. 〇 With his archer's skill Yi hit the mark at a hundred paces, but when arrows meet head on, how could it be a matter of skill?

The wooden man starts to sing; the stone woman gets up dancing. It is not reached by feelings or consciousness; how could it involve deliberation? Ministers serve their lords, children obey their parents. Not obeying is not filial, failure to serve is no help. With practice hidden, function secretly, like a fool, like an idiot. ● Just to continue in this way is ● called the host within the host.

▲■ *Maka Hannya Haramita Shingyo*

Ō KAN-JI-ZAI BO-SATSU /GYO JIN HAN-NYA HA-RA-MI-TA JI /
SHO-KEN GO UN KAI KU / Ō DO IS-SAI KU-YAKU / SHA-RI-SHI
/ SHIKI FU I KU / KU FU I SHIKI / SHIKI SOKU ZE KU / KU SOKU
ZE SHIKI / JU SO GYO SHIKI YAKU-BU NYO ZE / SHA-RI-SHI /
ZE SHO-HO KU-SO / FU SHO FU METSU / FU KU FU JO / FU ZO
FU GEN / ZE-KO KU CHU/ MU SHIKI / MU JU SO GYO SHIKI /
MU GEN NI BI ZE SHIN NI / MU SHIKI SHO KO MI SOKU HO /
MU GEN KAI / NAI-SHI MU I-SHIKI KAI / MU MU-MYO / YAKU
MU MU-MYO JIN / NAI-SHI MU RO SHI / YAKU MU RO SHI JIN /
MU KU SHU METSU DO / MU CHI YAKU MU TOKU / I MU-SHO
TOKU KO / BO-DAI-SAT-TA E HAN-NYA HA-RA-MI-TA Ō / KO
SHIN MU KE-GE / MU KE-GE KO / MU U KU-FU / ON-RI IS-SAI
TEN-DO MU-SO / KU-GYO NE-HAN / SAN-ZE SHO BUTSU E
HAN-NYA HA-RA-MI-TA Ō / KO TOKU A-NOKU-TA-RA / SAN-
MYAKU SAN-BO-DAI / KO CHI HAN-NYA HA-RA-MI-TA / ZE
DAI JIN SHU / ZE DAI MYO SHU / ZE MU-JO SHU / ZE MU-TO-
DO SHU / NO JO IS-SAI KU / SHIN-JITSU FU KO / KO SETSU
HAN-NYA HA-RA-MI-TA SHU / SOKU SETSU SHU WATSU /
GYA-TE GYA-TE ● HA-RA-GYA-TE / HARA-SO-GYA-TE ● BO-JI
SOWA-KA / HANNYA SHINGYO.

Names of the Buddhas and Ancestors

▼ Bibashi Butsu Daioshō	Hannyatara Daioshō
▼ Shiki Butsu Daioshō	Bodaidaruma Daioshō
▼ Bishafu Butsu Daioshō	Taiso Eka Daioshō
▼ Kuruson Butsu Daioshō	Kanchi Sosan Daioshō
▼ Kunagon Muni Butsu Daioshō	Daii Doshin Daioshō
▼ Kasho Butsu Daioshō	Diamon Konin Daioshō
▼ Shakamuni Butsu Daioshō	Daikan Eno Daioshō
Makakasho Daioshō	Seigen Gyoshi Daioshō
Ananda Daioshō	Sekito Kisen Daioshō
Shonawashu Daioshō	Yakusan Igen Daioshō
Ubakikuta Daioshō	Ungan Donjo Daioshō
Daitaka Daioshō	Tozan Ryokai Daioshō
Mishaka Daioshō	Ungo Doyo Daioshō
Bashumitsu Daioshō	Doan Dohi Daioshō
Butsudanandai Daioshō	Doan Kanshi Daioshō
Fudamitta Daioshō	Ryozan Enkan Daioshō
Barishiba Daioshō	Taiyo Kyogen Daioshō
Funayasha Daioshō	Toshi Gisei Daioshō
Anabotei Daioshō	Fuyo Dokai Daioshō
Kabimora Daioshō	Tanka Shijun Daioshō
Nagyaharajuna Daioshō	Choro Seiryō Daioshō
Kanadaiba Daioshō	Tendo Sokaku Daioshō
Ragorata Daioshō	Seccho Chikan Daioshō
Sogyanandai Daioshō	Tendo Nyojo Daioshō
Kayashata Daioshō	Eihei Dogen Daioshō
Kumorata Daioshō	Koun Ejo Daioshō
Shayata Daioshō	Tettsu Gikai Daioshō
Bashubanzu Daioshō	Keizan Jokin Daioshō
Manura Daioshō	Meiho Sotetsu Daioshō
Kakurokuna Daioshō	Shugan Dochin Daioshō
Shishibodai Daioshō	Tessan Shikaku Daioshō
Bashashita Daioshō	Keigan Eisho Daioshō
Funyomitta Daioshō	Chuzan Ryoun Daioshō

Gizan Tonin Daioshō
Jogaku Kenryu Daioshō
Kinen Horyu Daioshō
Diashitsu Chisen Daioshō
Kokei Shojun Daioshō
Sesso Yuho Daioshō
Kaiten Genju Daioshō
Shuzan Shunsho Daioshō
Chozan Ginetsu Daioshō
Fukuju Kochi Daioshō
Myodo Yuton Daioshō
Hakuho Genteki Daioshō
Gesshu Soko Daioshō

Tokuo Ryoko Daioshō
Mokushi Soen Daioshō
Gagoku Kankei Daioshō
Gento Sokuchu Daioshō
Kyozan Baizen Daioshō
Sozan Chimon Daioshō
Yozan Genki Daioshō
Kaigai Daicho Daioshō
Jikai Dainin Daioshō
▼ Daikan Nonin Daioshō
▼ Daikan Nonin Daioshō
▼ Daikan Nonin Daioshō

▲ *The Great Compassionate Dharani*

Õ Adoration to the Three Treasures—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha!
Adoration to Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, the Bodhisattva of Compassion!

Adoration to the one who removes all fear and suffering!

Õ Having adored Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, may we now recite this glorious dharani which purifies all beings, which fulfills the wishes of all beings.

Homage to Bodhisattva Mahasattva who embodies the Trikaya, who has the transcendental wisdom.

Homage to Bodhisattva Mahasattva who continues to save all beings without defilement in the mind.

Homage to Bodhisattva Mahasattva who sustains the highest, the most complete wisdom and who is free from all impediments.

Homage to Bodhisattva Mahasattva whose deeds reveal the fundamental purity of all beings.

Homage to Bodhisattva Mahasattva, who wipes away the three evil delusions—greed, anger, and folly.

Quick, quick! Come, come! Here, here!

A joy springs up in us.

Help us to enter into the realm of great realization.

Õ Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, Bodhisattva of Compassion, guide us to spiritual contentment.

Accomplishment, accomplishment!

Having testified to the freedom and compassion of the mind of Avalokiteshvara,

Having purified our own body and mind,

Õ Having become as brave as a lion,

Having become manifest into all beings,

Having attained to the Wheel of Dharma and the Lotus Flower, we can now save all beings without hindrance.

May the understanding of the mysterious nature of Avalokiteshvara prevail forever, ever, and ever.

Adoration to the Three Treasures—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha!

Adoration to Avalokiteshvara, the ● Bodhisattva Mahasattva, The ● Bodhisattva of Compassion!

May this dharani be effective.

Hail! ▲

Sho Sai Myo Kichijo Dharani

(Marvelously Beneficial, Disaster-Preventing Dharani)

NO MO SAM 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, CHISU SA CHISU SA, CHISU RI CHISU
RI, SOHA JA SOHA JA, SEN CHI GYA, SHIRI E SOMO
KO.

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▲ *Verses on the Faith Mind*

Õ The Great Way is not difficult
for those who have no preferences.
When love and hate are both absent
everything becomes clear and undisguised.
Make the smallest distinction, however,
and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart.

Õ If you wish to see the truth,
then hold no opinions for or against anything.
To set up what you like against what you dislike
is the disease of the mind.
When the deep meaning of things is not understood
the mind's essential peace is disturbed to no avail.

The Way is perfect like vast space
where nothing is lacking and nothing is in excess.
Indeed, it is due to our choosing to accept or reject
that we do not see the true nature of things.
Live neither in the entanglements of outer things,
nor in inner feelings of emptiness.
Be serene in the oneness of things
and such erroneous views will disappear by themselves.
When you try to stop activity to achieve passivity
your very effort fills you with activity.
As long as you remain in one extreme or the other
you will never know Oneness.
Those who do not live in the single Way
fail in both activity and passivity,
assertion and denial.
To deny the reality of things
is to miss their reality.
To assert the emptiness of things
is to miss their reality.
The more you talk and think about it
the further astray you wander from the truth.
Stop talking and thinking,
and there is nothing you will not be able to know.
To return to the root is to find the meaning,

but to pursue appearances is to miss the source.
At the moment of inner enlightenment
there is a going beyond appearance and emptiness.
The changes that appear to occur in the empty world
we call real only because of our ignorance.
Do not search for the truth; only cease to cherish opinions.

Do not remain in the dualistic state;
avoid such pursuits carefully.
If there is even a trace
of this and that, of right and wrong,
The Mind-essence will be lost in confusion.
Although all dualities come from the One,
do not be attached even to this One.
When the mind exists undisturbed in the Way,
nothing in the world can offend,
and when a thing can no longer offend,
it ceases to exist in the old way.

When no discriminating thoughts arise,
the old mind ceases to exist.
When thought objects vanish,
the thing-subject vanishes,
as when the mind vanishes, objects vanish.
Things are objects because of the subject;
the mind is such because of things.
Understand the relativity of these two
and the basic reality: the unity of emptiness.
In this emptiness the two are indistinguishable
and each contains in itself the whole world.
If you do not discriminate between coarse and fine
you will not be tempted to prejudice and opinion.

To live in the Great Way
is neither easy nor difficult,
but those with limited views
are fearful and irresolute;
the faster they hurry, the slower they go,
and clinging cannot be limited;
even to be attached to the idea of enlightenment

is to go astray.
Just let things be in their own way
and there will be neither coming nor going.

Obey the nature of things,
and you will walk freely and undisturbed.
When thought is in bondage, the truth is hidden,
for everything is murky and unclear,
and the burdensome practice of judging
brings annoyance and weariness.
What benefit can be derived from distinctions
and separations?

If you wish to move in the One Way
do not dislike even the world of senses and ideas.
Indeed, to accept them fully
is identical with true Enlightenment.
The wise strive toward no goals
but the foolish fetter themselves.
There is one Dharma, not many; distinctions arise
from the clinging needs of the ignorant.
To seek mind with the mind
is the greatest of all mistakes.

Rest and unrest derive from illusion;
with enlightenment there is no liking and disliking.
All dualities come from ignorant inference.
They are like dreams or flowers in air;
foolish to try to grasp them.
Gain and loss, right and wrong:
such thoughts must finally be abolished at once.

If the eye never sleeps,
all dreams will naturally cease.
If the mind makes no discriminations,
the ten thousand things
are as they are, of single essence.
To understand the mystery of the One-essence
is to be released from all entanglements.
When all things are seen equally

the timeless Self-essence is reached.
No comparisons or analogies are possible
in this causeless, relationless state.

Consider movement stationary
and the stationary in motion,
both movement and rest disappear.
When such dualities cease to exist
Oneness itself cannot exist.
To this ultimate finality
no law or description applies.

For the unified mind in accord with the Way
all self-centered striving ceases.
Doubts and irresolutions vanish
and life in true faith is possible.
With a single stroke we are freed from bondage;
nothing clings to us and we hold to nothing.
All is empty, clear, self-illuminating,
with no exertion of the mind's power.
Here thought, feeling, knowledge, and imagination
are of no value. In this world of Suchness
there is neither self nor other-than-self.

To come directly into harmony with this reality
Just simply say when doubt arises, "Not two."
In this "not two" nothing is separate,
nothing is excluded.

No matter when or where,
enlightenment means entering this truth.
And this truth is beyond extension or
diminution in time or space;
in it a single thought is ten thousand years.

Õ Emptiness here, Emptiness there,
but the infinite universe stands
always before your eyes.
Infinitely large and infinitely small;
no difference, for definitions have vanished

and no boundaries are seen.

◌ So too with Being and non-Being.
Don't waste time in doubts and arguments
that have nothing to do with this.

One thing, all things;
move among and intermingle,
without distinction.
To live in this realization
is to be without anxiety about non-perfection.
To live in this faith is the road to non-duality.
Because the non-dual is one with the trusting mind.

Words!

- The Way is beyond language,
- for in it there is
no yesterday
no tomorrow
no today.

▲ [Eko]

▲ *Zen Master Dogen's Vow*

Õ From this life throughout countless lives, we vow with all beings to hear the true Dharma. Hearing it, no doubt arises, nor is faith lacking. Õ Meeting and maintaining it, we renounce worldly affairs, and together with all beings and the great earth realize the Buddha Way.

Past negative actions accumulate and cause the arising of many obstacles to the practice of the Way. May all Buddhas and Ancestors who have realized the Way extend their compassion and free us from these karmic effects, allowing us to practice without hindrance. May they share with us their boundless compassion, and fill the universe with the virtue of their enlightened teaching.

Buddhas and Ancestors of old were as we. In the future, we shall be Buddhas and Ancestors. Revering Buddhas and Ancestors, we are one Buddha and one Ancestor. Awakening Bodhi-mind, we are one Bodhi-mind. As they extend their compassion freely to us, we are able to realize Buddhahood and let go of the realization.

The Chan Master Lung-ya said:

Õ Those unenlightened in past lives will now be enlightened. In this life, take care of the body, the fruit of many lives. Before Buddhas were enlightened, they were the same as we. Enlightened people of today are exactly the same as the ancients.

Õ This is the exact transmission of a verified Buddha, so quietly explore the far-reaching effects of these causes and conditions.

Repenting in this way, one never fails to receive help, deep and unending, from all Buddhas and Ancestors. ● Revealing before Buddha one's lack of faith and failure to practice dissolves the root of these unwholesome actions. ●

This is the pure and simple manifestation of true practice, of the true mind and body of faith.



▲ *Self-Fulfilling Samadhi*

Ō Ancestors and Buddhas, who have maintained the Buddha dharma, all have held that practice based upon proper sitting in zazen in self-fulfilling 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. Ō 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 incense-offerings, homage-paying, chanting Buddha's names, 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 renew 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, people in zazen without fail cast off body and mind, sever the heretofore disordered and defiled thoughts and views emanating from discriminating consciousness, conform totally within themselves 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 self-transcending Buddha, vigorously uplifting the dharma-transcending 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 sharing and unfolding the inexhaustible Buddha-virtue, 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 and its objects both arise and disappear within the stillness of Samadhi, since it occurs within the sphere of self-fulfillment 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, walls and fences 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, walls and fences. ◌ The realm of self-enlightenment and enlightening others is fundamentally endowed with the characteristics of realization with nothing lacking, and causes the principle of realization unceasingly.

Because of this, when even just one person, at one time, sits in zazen, they become, imperceptibly, 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 endowed with original practice within the original face—which is impossible to measure or comprehend.

You should know that if all the Buddhas in the ten directions together engage the full power of their Buddha-wisdom, ● they could never reach the limit, or measure, or ● comprehend the virtue, of one person's zazen.

▲ Eko

▲ *The Life Span of the Thus Come One*

Õ Since I attained Buddhahood
the number of kalpas that have passed
is an immeasurable hundreds, thousands, ten thousands,
millions, trillions, asamkhyas.

Constantly I have preached the Law, teaching, converting
countless millions of living beings,
causing them to enter the Buddha way, Õ
all this for immeasurable kalpas.

In order to save living beings,
as an expedient means I appear to enter nirvana
but in truth I do not pass into extinction.
I am always here, preaching the Law.

I am always here,
but through my transcendental powers
I make it so that the living beings in their befuddlement
do not see me even when close by.

When the multitude see that I have passed into extinction,
far and wide they offer alms to my relics.
All harbor thoughts of yearning
and in their minds thirst to gaze at me.

When living beings have become truly faithful,
Honest, and upright, gentle in intent,
single-mindedly desiring to see the Buddha,
not hesitating even if it costs them their lives,
then I and the assembly of followers
appear together on Holy Eagle Peak.

At that time I tell the living beings
that I am always here, never entering extinction,
but that because of the power of an expedient means
at times I appear to be extinct, at other times not,

and that if there are living beings in other lands
who are reverent and sincere in their wish to believe,
then among them too
I will preach the unsurpassed Law.

But you have not heard of this,
so you suppose that I enter extinction.
When I look at living beings
I see them drowned in a sea of suffering.

Therefore I do not show myself,
causing them to thirst for me.
Then when their minds are filled with yearning,
at last I appear and preach the Law for them.

Such are my transcendental powers.
For asamkhya kalpas
Constantly I have dwelled on Holy Eagle Peak
And in various other places.

When living beings witness the end of a kalpa
and all is consumed in a great fire,
this, my land, remains safe and tranquil,
constantly filled with heavenly and human beings.
The halls and pavilions in its gardens and groves
Are adorned with various kinds of gems.
Jeweled trees abound in flowers and fruit
where living beings enjoy themselves at ease.

The gods strike heavenly drums,
constantly making many kinds of music.
Mandarava blossoms rain down,
scattering over the Buddha and the great assembly.

My pure land is not destroyed,
yet the multitude see it as consumed in fire,
with anxiety, fear, and other sufferings
filling it everywhere.

These living beings with their various offenses

Through causes arising from their evil actions,
spend asamkhyā kalpas
without hearing the name of the Three Treasures.

But those who practice meritorious ways,
who are gentle, peaceful, honest and upright,
all of them will see me
here in person, preaching the Law.

At times for this multitude
I describe the Buddha's life span as immeasurable,
and to those who see the Buddha only after a long time
I explain how difficult it is to meet the Buddha.

Such is the power of my wisdom
that its sagacious beams shine without measure.
This lifespan of countless kalpas
I gained as the result of lengthy practice.

You who are possessed of wisdom,
entertain no doubts on this point! ॐ
Cast them off, end them forever,
For the Buddha's words are true, not false.

He is like a skilled physician
who uses an expedient means to cure his deranged children.
Though in fact alive, he gives out word he is dead,
yet no one can say he speaks falsely.

I am the father of this world,
saving those who suffer and are afflicted. ॐ
Because of the befuddlement of ordinary people,
though I live, I give out word I have entered extinction.

For if they see me constantly,
arrogance and selfishness arise in their minds.
Abandoning restraint, they give themselves up to the five desires
and fall into the evil paths of existence.

Always I am aware of which living beings
practice the Way, and which do not,
and in response to their needs for salvation

I preach various doctrines for them.

- At all times I think to myself:
How can I cause living beings
- To quickly gain entry into the unsurpassed way
and quickly acquire the body of a Buddha? ▲

▲ *The Mahaparinirvana Sutra*

Ō Thus I have heard: The Exalted One was once living in Rajagaha, on the hill called Vulture Peak. He addressed the venerable Ananda and said: “Go now, Ananda, and assemble in the Service Hall all Sangha members that live in or near Rajagaha.”

Ō And he did. Then, he went to the Exalted One and said: “The Sangha is assembled; let the Exalted One do as he wishes.”

Then the Exalted One rose and went to the Service Hall. When he was seated, he addressed the Sangha, saying: “Friends, I will now teach you the seven conditions on which the welfare of a community depends. Listen well.”

“Yes, lord,” said the disciples, and the Exalted One spoke:

“As long, friends, as the Sangha gathers often—as long as you come together with like mind, act harmoniously, and carry out peacefully the duties of the Order—as long as the Sangha shall establish nothing that has not already been established, abrogate nothing that has been already established, and act in accordance with the rules of the Order—as long as the Sangha honors, reveres, and supports experienced leaders of the Order and regarding it a duty to listen to their words—as long as Sangha members do not succumb to the influence of the desire which, springing up within them, would give rise to renewed existence—as long as Sangha members delight in a life of solitude—as long as they train their minds in self-possession so that good people in the community come to them and as long as those who have come dwell at ease—the Sangha will not decline but prosper. As long as these seven conditions are fulfilled and Sangha members are well instructed in them, the Sangha will not decline but prosper.

“As long as Sangha members persevere in kind action, speech, and thought, both in public and in private—as long as they divide donations impartially and share them equally, even the contents of one begging bowl, in accordance with the rules of the Order—as long as all Sangha members live near those who are accomplished in the public and private practice of those virtues that are conducive to liberation, cultivate concentration, are praised by the wise, and are untainted by the desire for future existence—as long as Sangha members live near each other, cherishing both in public and in private the insight that leads to salvation from suffering—the Sangha will prosper and not decline.”

Then the Exalted One went to the village of Beluva with a great number of

disciples, and there addressed the Sangha, saying, “Friends, spend the rainy season in retreat near Vesali, close to each other. I will spend the season here at Beluva.”

“Yes, lord!” said the disciples, and they began the rainy season near Vesali, close to each other, while the Exalted One stayed in Beluva.

Soon thereafter, the Exalted One became very ill, experienced sharp pains, and came close to death, but, mindful and self-possessed, he bore his illness without complaint.

Then he thought, “It would not be right for me to pass on without addressing the Sangha. Let me bend this sickness down again, and keep on until my allotted time ends.”

So the Exalted One, by willful, strong effort, bent the sickness down again, and kept his hold on life until after he had finished what he needed to finish, and the sickness ease.

Soon after, the Blessed One began to recover, and when he was strong again, he came out from his lodging and sat down in the shade on a seat prepared for him. The venerable Ananda went to him, bowed, sat down respectfully to one side, and said, “I have seen you now in health and in sickness. When you were ill, I became weak as a creeper, my eyes began to fail, and my faculties became weak. Yet, I took comfort in thinking that you would not pass away without leaving instructions for the Order.”

The Exalted One replied, “Does the Order expect that of me Ananda? I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; in respect to the truth, Ananda, the Tathagata does not hold the closed fist of the teacher, keeping some things back. Surely, if there is anyone who thinks, ‘It is I, who will lead the Order,’ or ‘The Order is dependent on me,’ it is they who should give instructions concerning the Order. The Tathagata does not think that it is he who should lead the Order or that the Order is dependent on him. Why then should the Tathagata leave instructions for the Order? I have grown old, full of years; my journey is coming to a close; I have nearly reached the end of my days. Just as a worn-out cart, Ananda, can be kept going only with the help of braces and thongs, so the body of the Tathagata can only be kept going by bandaging it up. It is only when the Tathagata, by not attending to outward things, becomes absorbed in the concentration of heart that is not concerned with material objects is the body of the Tathagata at ease.

“Therefore, Ananda, be lamps to yourselves. Be refuges to yourselves. Take no

external refuge. Hold to the truth as a lamp. Do not look for refuge to anyone beside yourselves. And how is one to be a lamp to oneself, a refuge to oneself, taking no external refuge, holding to the truth as a lamp, taking truth as a refuge, and not looking to another as refuge?

“Friends, one strenuously observes the body, remaining self-possessed and mindful, overcoming desire and aversion. One observes feelings, perceptions, and mental formations in the same way, strenuously, remaining self-possessed and mindful, overcoming the desire and aversion common in the world.

“And those who, Ananda, either now or after I am dead, are lamps to themselves and refuges to themselves, who take no external refuge in anyone beside themselves, it is they, Ananda, among my disciples who will experience the deepest understanding, but they must be anxious to learn.”

Then the Exalted One, with a great many Sangha members, went to the Sala Grove of the Mallas. At that time, the twin Sala Trees were blooming out of season and their flowers dropped and covered the Tathagata, in reverence to the successor of the Buddhas of old. Heavenly Mandarava flowers and sandalwood powder came down from the sky and descended on the Tathagata; heavenly music sounded and songs were sung—all in reverence to the successor of the Buddhas of old.

“Now, it is not in this way, Ananda,” said the Exalted One, “that the Tathagata is truly honored and revered. The Tathagata is most truly honored by the brother or the sister, the devout man or the devout woman who walks according to the precepts, who fulfills them, whose life is in accord with them. Such people rightly honor and revere the Tathagata. Therefore, Ananda, be constantly at one with the precepts, walk according to them, and fulfill them in your daily life.”

Then the venerable Ananda went into the Vihara and stood leaning against the door, weeping. “Oh,” he cried, “I am still not completely awake; I have still not worked out my own salvation, and the Master, who has been so kind, is about to pass away.”

Now the Exalted One asked, “Where, friends, is Ananda?”

“He has gone to the Vihara,” a disciple replied, “and he leans against the door weeping, for he is thinking, “I am still not completely awake; I have still not worked out my own salvation, and the Master who has been so kind is about to pass away.”

The Exalted One then said to the disciple, “Go call Ananda, and tell him I am

asking for him.”

The disciple did as the Exalted One wished, and Ananda came to the Exalted One, bowed down, and respectfully took a seat to one side.

Then the Exalted One said, “Enough, Ananda! Do not be troubled; do not weep. Have I not already told you many times that it is the nature of all things, even those most near and dear to us, to pass away and that we must leave them, divide ourselves from them, sever ourselves from them. Everything born must die; all beings carry within them the seeds of dissolution. For a long time, Ananda, you have been very close to me. You have been kind, good and loving, in thought, word, and deed; that has never varied and is beyond measure. You have done well, Ananda. Put forth great effort, and you too will soon be free.

◌ “In you and in some other disciples, Ananda, the thought may arise, ‘The words of the Master have ceased; we no longer have a teacher.’ But it is not so, Ananda. The dharma, and the rules of the Order, which I have set forth and laid down for you, will be your teachers after I am gone.” ◌

Then the Exalted One addressed the Sangha and said: ● “Friends, impermanence is inherent in all conditioned things; ● work out your own salvation with diligence!”

These were the last words of the Tathagata.

▲ (Eko)

In Praise Of Zazen

Living beings are in essence Buddhas.
It is like water and ice.
There is no ice without water,
There are no Buddhas outside living beings.

What a shame, living beings seek afar,
Not knowing what is at hand.
It is like wailing from thirst
In the midst of water,
Or wandering lost among the poor,
Yet born into a wealthy family.

The cause of rebirth in the six realms
Is the darkness of our delusions.
Treading dark path after dark path
When can we escape birth and death?

Great vehicle zazen goes beyond all praise.
Giving, keeping precepts, and the other perfections,
Chanting Buddha's name, repentance, training, and
Many other kinds of wholesome deeds,
All find their source in zazen.

When you sit even once,
The merit obliterates countless wrongdoings.
How can there be evil realms?
The Pure Land is not far.

If by good fortune you have the occasion
To hear this teaching,
Admire it and rejoice in it.

You will attain boundless happiness—
How much more if you dedicate yourself
And realize your true nature directly.
This true nature is *mu* nature.
You are already apart from useless discussions.
The gate opens where cause and effect are inseparable,
The road of not-two, not-three goes straight ahead.

Make form *mu*-form form,
Going and returning, not anywhere else.
Make thought *mu*-thought thought,
Singing and dancing, the dharma voice.

How vast the sky of unobstructed concentration!
How brilliant the full moon of fourfold wisdom!

At this very moment, what can be sought?
Nirvana is immediate.
This place is the lotus land.
This body is the body of Buddha.

Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen

The Way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent on practice and realization? The true vehicle is self-sufficient. What need is there for special effort? Indeed, the whole body is free from dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from this very place; what is the use of traveling around to practice? And yet, if there is a hairsbreadth deviation, it is like the gap between heaven and earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion. Suppose you are confident in your understanding and rich in enlightenment, gaining the wisdom that knows at a glance, attaining the Way and clarifying the mind, arousing an aspiration to reach for the heavens. You are playing in the entranceway, but you still are short of the vital path of emancipation.

Consider the Buddha: although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of upright sitting can yet be seen. As for Bodhidharma, although he had received the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still. If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice?

Therefore, put aside the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing phrases and learn to take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will manifest. If you want such a thing, get to work on such a thing immediately.

For practicing Zen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Put aside all involvements and suspend all affairs. Do not think “good” or “bad.” Do not judge true or false. Give up the operations of mind, intellect, and consciousness; stop measuring with thoughts, ideas, and views. Have no designs on becoming a Buddha. How could that be limited to sitting or lying down?

At your sitting place, spread out a thick mat and put a cushion on it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position. In the full-lotus position, first place your right foot on your left thigh, then your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, simply place your left foot on your right thigh. Tie your robes loosely, and arrange them neatly. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left hand on

your right palm, thumb-tips lightly touching. Straighten your body and sit upright, leaning neither left nor right, neither forward nor backward. Align your ears with your shoulders and your nose with your navel. Rest the tip of your tongue against the front of the roof of your mouth, with teeth and lips together, both shut. Always keep your eyes open, and breathe softly through your nose.

Once you have adjusted your posture, take a breath and exhale fully, rock your body right and left, and settle into steady, immovable sitting. Think of not-thinking. Not thinking—what kind of thinking is that? Nonthinking. This is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not meditation practice. It is simply the Dharma gate of joyful ease, the practice-realization of totally culminated enlightenment. It is the koan realized; traps and snares can never reach it. If you grasp the point, you are like a dragon gaining the water, like a tiger taking to the mountains. For you must know the true Dharma appears of itself, so that from the start 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 mundane and sacred, and dying while either sitting or standing, have all depended entirely on the power of zazen.

In addition, triggering awakening with a finger, a banner, a needle, or a mallet and effecting realization with a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout—these cannot be understood by discriminative thinking, much less can they be known through the practice of supernatural power. They must represent conduct beyond seeing and hearing. Are they not a standard prior to knowledge and views?

This being the case, intelligence or lack of it is not an issue; make no distinction between the dull and the sharp-witted. If you concentrate your effort single-mindedly, that in itself is wholeheartedly engaging the Way. Practice-realization is naturally undefiled. Going forward is, after all, an everyday affair.

In general, in our world and others, in both India and China, all equally hold the

Buddha-seal. While each lineage expresses its own style, they are all simply devoted to sitting, totally blocked in resolute stability. Although they say that there are ten thousand distinctions and a thousand variations, they just wholeheartedly engage the way in zazen. Why leave behind the seat in your own home to wander in vain through the dusty realms of other lands? If you make one misstep, you stumble past what is directly in front of you.

You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not pass your days and nights in vain. You are taking care of the essential activity of the Buddha Way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from a flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, the fortunes of life like a 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 doubt the true dragon. Devote your energies to the way that points directly to the real thing. Revere the one who has gone beyond learning and is free from effort. Accord with the enlightenment of all the Buddhas; succeed to the Samadhi of all the ancestors. Continue to live in such a way, and you will be such a person. The treasure store will open of itself, and you may enjoy it freely.

Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo

KAN ZE ON

NA MU BUTSU

YO BUTSU U IN

YO BUTSU U EN

BUP PO SO EN

JO RAKU KA JO

CHO NEN KAN ZE ON

BO NEN KAN ZE ON

NEN NEN JU SHIN KI

NEN NEN FU RI SHIN

Opening and Closing Chants for Dharma Talks

Opening:

The Dharma is vast and subtle
We now have a chance to see this
Study this and practice this
May we realize this true meaning --\~/--

Closing:

The many beings are numberless; vowing to carry them across
Greed, anger and ignorance rise endlessly; vowing to cut off the mind road
Dharma gates are countless; vowing to wake to them all
Buddha's way is all-embracing; vowing to follow through.

Three Refuges in Pali

Buddham saranam gacchami
Dhammam saranam gacchami
Sangham saranam gacchami

Dudyampi buddham saranam gacchami
Dudyampi dhammam saranam gacchami
Dudyampi sangham saranam gacchami

Tatyampi buddham saranam gacchami
Tatyampi dhammam saranam gacchami
Tatyampi sangham saranam gacchami

▲ Dai Hi Shin Darani Ō

Namu kara tan no, tora ya ya, namu ori ya, boryo ki chi shihu ra ya, fuji sato bo ya, moko sato bo ya, mo ko kya runi kya ya, Ō en sa hara ha e shu tan no ton sha, namu shiki ri toi mo, ori ya boryo ki chi, shihu ra rin to bo, na mu no ra, kin ji, ki ri, mo ko ho do, sha mi sa bo, o to jo shu ben, o shu in, sa bo sa to, no mo bo gya, mo ha te cho, to ji to, en, o bo ryo ki, ryo gya chi, kya ra chi, i kiri mo ko, fuji sa to, sa bo, sa bo, mo ra mo ra, mo ki mo ki, ri to in ku ryo ku ryo, ke mo to ryo to ryo, ho ja ya chi, mo ko ho ja ya chi, to ra to ra, chiri ni, shihu ra ya, sha ro sha ro, mo mo ha mo ra, ho chi ri, i ki i ki, shi no shi no, ora san fura sha ri, ha za ha za, fura sha ya, ku ryo ku ryo, mo ra ku ryo ku ryo, ki ri sha ro sha ro, shi ri shi ri, su ryo su ryo, fuji ya, fuji ya, fudo ya fudo ya, mi chiri ya, Ō nora kin ji, chiri shuni no, hoyo mono, somo ko, shido ya, somo ko, moko shido ya, somo ko, shido yu ki, shihu ra ya, somo ko Ō nora kin ji, somo ko, mo ra no ra somo ko, shira su omo gya ya, somo ko, sobo moko shido ya, somo ko, shaki ra oshi do ya, somo ko, hodo mogya shido ya, somo ko, nora kin ji ha gyara ya, somo ko, mo hori shin gyara ya, somo ko, namu kara tan no tora ya ya, ● namu ori ya, boryo ki chi, shihu ra ya, somo ko, ● shite do modo ra, hodo ya so mo ko

[Eko]