



INCENSE OFFERING

In gratitude, we offer this incense. May all beings with whom we are inseparably connected be liberated, awakened, healed, fulfilled, and free. May there be peace in this world, and an end to war, violence, poverty, injustice and oppression. And may we, together with all beings, complete our spiritual journeys.



LOVING KINDNESS SUTRA

This is what should be accomplished by one who is wise,
Who seeks the good and has attained peace:

Let one be strenuous, upright, and sincere,
Without pride, easily contented, and joyous.

Let one not be submerged by the things of the world. Let one not take upon oneself the burden of riches. Let one's senses be controlled. Let one be wise, but not puffed up. And let one not desire great possessions, even for one's family. Let one do nothing that is mean or that the wise would reprove.

May all beings be happy. May they be joyous and live in safety. All living beings, whether they be weak or strong, In high, middle, or low realms of existence, Small or great, visible or invisible, near or far, born or to be born, May all beings be happy. Let no one deceive one another, Nor despise any being in any state. Let none by anger or hatred wish harm to another. Even as a mother at the risk of her life watches over and protects her only child, so with a boundless mind should one cherish all living things, suffusing love over the entire world—above, below, and all around without limit.

So let one cultivate an infinite goodwill towards the whole world. Standing or walking, sitting or lying down, during all one's waking hours, let one practice the Way with gratitude. Not holding to fixed views, endowed with insight, freed from sense appetites.

One who achieves the Way will be freed from birth and death,
Liberated from suffering.



THE HEART SUTRA

The Bodhisattva of Compassion from the depths of perfect wisdom saw the emptiness of all conditioned beings and sundered the bonds that create suffering.

Know then:

Form here is only emptiness, emptiness only form.

Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form.

Feeling, thought and choice consciousness itself are the same as this.

Conditions here are empty, fundamentally empty.

None are born or die. Nor are they stained or pure,
nor do they wax or wane.

So in emptiness no form, no feeling, thought or choice,
nor is there consciousness. No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind;
no color, sound, smell, taste, touch or what the mind takes hold of,
nor even act of sensing.

No ignorance or end of it, nor all that comes of ignorance:
no withering, no death, no end of them.

Nor is there pain or cause of pain or cease in pain or noble path
to lead from pain, not even wisdom to attain, attainment too is emptiness.

So know that the Bodhisattva, holding to nothing whatever
but dwelling in perfect wisdom, is freed of delusive hindrance,
rid of the fear bred by it, and reaches clearest nirvana.

All buddhas of past and present, buddhas of future time
through faith in perfect wisdom come to full enlightenment.

Know then the great dharani, the radiant, peerless mantra,
the supreme, unfailing mantra, the Prajna Paramita,
whose words allay all pain. This is highest wisdom,
true beyond all doubt, know and proclaim its truth:

Gate gate paragate
parasamgate bodhi svaha
gone gone gone beyond
gone beyond beyond



MAKA HAN NYA HARA MITA SHIN GYO (HEART SUTRA IN JAPANESE)

KAN JI ZAI BO SA GYO JIN HAN-NYA HA RA MI TA JI
SHO KEN GO ON KAI KU 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 FUJO FU ZO FU GEN
ZE KO KU CHU MU SHIKI MU JU SO GYO SHIKI
MU GEN-NI BI ZES-SHIN I
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 TOK'-KO
BO DAI SAT-TA E HAN-NYA HA RA MI TA KO
SHIM-MU KEI GE MU KEI 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 KO
TOKU A NOKU TA RA SAM-MYAKU SAM-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 TO SHU
NO JO IS-SAI KU SHIN JITSU FU KO
KO SETSU HAN-NYA HA RA MI TA SHU
SOKU SETSU SHU WATSU
GYA TEI GYA TEI HA RA GYA TEI HARA SO GYA TEI
BO JI SOWA KA HAN-NYA SHIN GYO



KOBUN'S INTRODUCTION

What is zazen, shikantaza? What kind of sitting are we doing here? There is a little misunderstanding about so-called Zen or Buddhist life; I'd like to clear it up a little bit, and reassure your sense of basic confidence that however you are is the way it should be. I mean daily life, however you manage your daily life, that is how it should be. For a long time this sitting was done only in a closed society like a monastery. It was the traditional way of protecting the quality of this practice.

My basic intention is to really open this sitting opportunity to everybody who is ready to do it and enjoy it. No division between monks and nuns, young and old. I want you to understand this kind of practice. Some people trained in a monastery or communal situation with well set schedules and regulations may have a quite a difficult time with almost no rules. People come and go and there is no scolding and no one carrying a stick to beat you like an old rug or dumb man. Many people say that's not sitting, but I believe this is the real sitting!

Whoever sits, that person's mind embraces the whole situation, centered by that person. So each person has full responsibility and full understanding by themselves for what sitting means to them. The teaching is within that person. Each person's sitting includes how they live, how they think things, where they came from. Nothing is missed, nothing is needed to change from how you are actually living to how it should be. There is no "should be" kind of thing. In one sense, it's a terrible state, the hardest kind of situation.

There is no crutch, nothing to hang onto to order your mind.

I say you cannot call this Zen or Buddhism. Then what is it? People get mad at me! They ask, "Then what are you?" To have no identification is so insecure in one sense; people are very shaky sometimes. But as you notice, no one forces you or orders you to do this. My great hope is for success in a real sense, for satisfactory practice in this sitting.

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KOBUN'S INTRODUCTION *(Continued from previous page)*

I would like to reveal the natural nature of sitting fully as it is. If I put some concept on this and make you understand what I think is a ideal way to sit, I would be a kind of special gardener who fixes boxes and lets you go through to become square bamboo. Or I would be an automatic newspaper man who runs a newspaper, whoever comes, I would just put you in the machine and make you flat and you would come out a squished being, or something like this!

In Japan there is still a strong force of tradition where monasteries closed people out from sitting. Now it is like a secret teaching has been brought to us from a deep secret place; no one knows how valuable it is. People in Japan still feel strongly that sitting shouldn't be done so easily. A sort of hoarding of teaching is going on. But even if this treasure is brought to us, this kind of treasure is not seen by people, so there is actually no danger. The only danger is if you guide people the wrong way with it. In this sense, Dogen Zenji was very right, if you want to do zazen or any kind of practice properly, the only way to master it is to study with the right teacher.

Too much talk about zazen or shikantaza is not so good for you. It's impossible to teach the meaning of sitting. Until you really experience and confirm it by yourself, you cannot believe it. It has tremendous depth, and year after year this gorgeous world of shikantaza appears. It's up to you to cultivate it. Because you are Buddhas yourselves, you can sit. Dogen named this sitting "great Gate of Peace and Joy". Simply, it is peaceful, eternally peaceful, pleasurable and joyful. Shikantaza doesn't have the name of any religion, but it is, in its quality, a very true religious way to live.



MENDING WALL *(By Robert Frost)*

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.
The work of hunters is another thing:
I have come after them and made repair
Where they have left not one stone on a stone,
But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,
To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,
No one has seen them made or heard them made,
But at spring mending-time we find them there.
I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
And on a day we meet to walk the line
And set the wall between us once again.
We keep the wall between us as we go.
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.
And some are loaves and some so nearly balls
We have to use a spell to make them balance:
'Stay where you are until our backs are turned!'
We wear our fingers rough with handling them.
Oh, just another kind of out-door game,
One on a side. It comes to little more:
There where it is we do not need the wall:
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.
My apple trees will never get across
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.
He only says, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder
If I could put a notion in his head:

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MENDING WALL *(Continued from previous page)*

'Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
What I was walling in or walling out,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
He said it for himself. I see him there
Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
He moves in darkness as it seems to me,
Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
He will not go behind his father's saying,
And he likes having thought of it so well
He says again, 'Good fences make good neighbors.'



THANKS *(By W.S. Merwin)*

Listen

with the night falling we are saying thank you
we are stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings
we are running out of the glass rooms
with our mouths full of food to look at the sky
and say thank you
we are standing by the water looking out
in different directions
back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging
after funerals we are saying thank you
after the news of the dead
whether or not we knew them we are saying thank you
looking up from tables we are saying thank you
in a culture up to its chin in shame
living in the stench it has chosen we are saying thank you

over telephones we are saying thank you
in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators
remembering wars and the police at the back door
and the beatings on stairs we are saying thank you
with the crooks in office with the rich and fashionable
unchanged we go on saying thank you thank you
with the animals dying around us
our lost feelings we are saying thank you
with the forests falling faster than the minutes
of our lives we are saying thank you
with the words going out like cells of a brain
with the cities growing over us like the earth
we are saying thank you faster and faster
with nobody listening we are saying thank you
we are saying thank you and waving
dark though it is



SHIN JIN MEI FAITH IN MIND

The Perfect Way knows no difficulties
Except that it refuses to make preferences;
Only when freed from hate and love,
It reveals itself fully and without disguise;
A tenth of an inch's difference,
And heaven and earth are set apart;
If you wish to see it before your own eyes,
Have no fixed thoughts either for or against it.

To set up what you like against what you dislike—
This is the disease of the mind:
When the deep meaning of the Way is not understood
Peace of mind is disturbed to no purpose.

The Way is perfect like unto vast space,
With nothing wanting, nothing superfluous:
It is indeed due to making choice
That its suchness is lost sight of.

Pursue not the outer entanglements,
Dwell not in the inner void;
Be serene in the oneness of things,
And dualism vanishes by itself.

When you strive to gain quiescence by
stopping motion,
The quiescence thus gained is ever in motion;
As long as you tarry in the dualism,
How can you realize oneness?

And when oneness is not thoroughly understood,
In two ways loss is sustained:
The denying of reality is the asserting of it,
And the asserting of emptiness is the denying of it.

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SHIN JIN MEI
FAITH IN MIND *(Continued from previous page)*

Wordiness and intellection—The more with them the further astray we go;
Away therefore with wordiness and intellection,
And there is no place where we cannot pass freely.

When we return to the root, we gain the meaning; When we pursue external
objects, we lose the reason. The moment we are enlightened within,
We go beyond the voidness of a world confronting us.

Transformations going on in an empty world which confronts us
Appear real all because of Ignorance: Try not to seek after the true,
Only cease to cherish opinions.

Abide not with dualism, Carefully avoid pursuing it; As soon as you have right
and wrong, Confusion ensues, and Mind is lost.

The two exist because of the One, But hold not even to this One;
When a mind is not disturbed, The ten thousand things offer no offense.

No offense offered, and no ten thousand things;
No disturbance going, and no mind set up to work:
The subject is quieted when the object ceases,
The object ceases when the subject is quieted.
The object is an object for the subject,
The subject is a subject for the object:
Know that the relativity of the two
Rests ultimately on one Emptiness.

In one Emptiness the two are not distinguished,
And each contains in itself all the ten thousand things:
When no discrimination is made between this and that,
How can a one-sided and prejudiced view arise?

The Great Way is calm and large-hearted,
For it, nothing is easy, nothing is hard;
Small views are irresolute, The more in haste the tardier they go.

Clinging is never kept within bounds It is sure to go the wrong way;
Quit it, and things follow their own courses,
While the Essence neither departs nor abides.



SHIKANTAZA

The great pleasure, the great accomplishment of your way-seeking is in the realization of sitting. This form of sitting, this place to sit on this earth, this time to sit, the twentieth century, all have lots of problems. The shikantaza way is giving birth to the Buddha seed. It is not a person becoming a better person, it is the actualization of what we are.

To sit in shikantaza is very uncomfortable at first. It's rather more peaceful to sink into a warm soft couch and have a nice drink. That's peace, we may say. But to recover our basic view of sanity and clarity, to see how everything actually arises and falls moment after moment is how to take this sitting posture.

Awakening, continuous awakening is nothing but our basic nature. Putting that awakening into some form as so-called being, as a man or a woman, explains what shikantaza is. When you jump into the Buddha's world, you place yourself in the center of annuttara-samyaksambodhi. That is shikantaza's real meaning, real action. Shikantaza is immeasurable, it's unthinkable. You can use your entire system of knowing, but it is impossible to completely understand it.

Shikantaza is not what we usually think, it is truly personal deeds, because only if one decides to sit does it appear. Sitting cannot be fully experienced by imagination. Shikantaza has a kind of slippery feeling to it. This means that it is easy to slip off of it. It's quite slippery because it relates to your everyday condition. In each sitting you have to sense it without anyone's help. There are no techniques; there is no measuring stick with which to evaluate it. There is no way of knowing what it is or what you are doing. All kinds of conceptualizations, ideas, hopes fall away from it. They cannot stay in your meditation.

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SHIKANTAZA *(continued from previous page)*

Sitting on your cushion is not relaxation, it is the result of all your knowledge. Every experience you have come through sits there each time. It is very serious. Otherwise, you sit because it feels good, and you are comfortable, and once in a while you feel an ecstatic sensation in your body. You feel calmness, stillness, clarity, and forget there are hungry people on this earth. You forget there are lots of diseases which are killing people. If you do not observe that in your sitting, you are just escaping into your desire. It happens if you mistake or limit the focus of your sitting practice.

Sitting shikantaza is the place itself, and things. The dynamics of all Buddhas are in it. When you sit, the cushion sits with you. If you wear glasses, the glasses sit with you. Clothing sits with you. House sits with you. People who are moving around outside all sit with you. They don't take the sitting posture!

Sitting shikantaza does not depend on human intellect. It is not something you understand. It's indescribable. We say the contents of sitting are beyond our thinking system or our sensations. Belief or confidence is not what we usually think it is. Doing shikantaza shows utter trust and belief in it. If you explain shikantaza it becomes something which you don't understand, but you can experience sitting with everything with the understanding that everything is there, is there with you.

Buddha's sitting is way beyond purity and impurity, holiness and unholiness. It is beyond Bodhisattva's sitting, which is endless. Bodhisattva's sitting is like a seed which never stops flourishing; it always come back.



THE FOURTEEN PRECEPTS OF ENGAGED BUDDHISM

1. Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory, or ideology, even Buddhist ones. Buddhist systems of thought are guiding means; they are not absolute truth.

2. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth. Avoid being narrow-minded and bound to present views. Learn and practice nonattachment from views in order to be open to receive others' viewpoints. Truth is found in life and not merely in conceptual knowledge. Be ready to learn throughout your entire life and to observe reality in yourself and in the world at all times.

3. Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda, or even education. However, through compassionate dialogue, help others renounce fanaticism and narrowness.

4. Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering, including personal contact, visits, images, and sounds. By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world.

5. Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry. Do not take as the aim of your life Fame, profit, wealth, or sensual pleasure. Live simply and share time, energy, and material resources with those who are in need.

6. Do not maintain anger or hatred. Learn to penetrate and transform them when they are still seeds in your consciousness. As soon as they arise, turn your attention to your breath in order to see and understand the nature of your hatred.

7. Do not lose yourself in dispersion and in your surroundings. Practice mindful breathing to come back to what is happening in the present moment. Be in touch with what is wondrous, refreshing, and healing both inside and around you. Plant seeds of joy, peace, and understanding in yourself in order to facilitate the work of transformation in the depths of your consciousness.

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THE FOURTEEN PRECEPTS OF ENGAGED BUDDHISM *(continued from previous page)*

8. Do not utter words that can create discord and cause the community to break. Make every effort to reconcile and resolve all conflicts, however small.

9. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people. Do not utter words that cause division and hatred. Do not spread news that you do not know to be certain. Do not criticize or condemn things of which you are not sure. Always speak truthfully and constructively. Have the courage to speak out about situations of injustice, even when doing so may threaten your own safety.

10. Do not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform your community into a political party. A religious community, however, should take a clear stand against oppression and injustice and should strive to change the situation without engaging in partisan conflicts.

11. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature. Do not invest in companies that deprive others of their chance to live. Select a vocation that helps realize your ideal of compassion.

12. Do not kill. Do not let others kill. Find whatever means possible to protect life and prevent war.

13. Possess nothing that should belong to others. Respect the property of others, but prevent others from profiting from human suffering or the suffering of other species on Earth.

14. Do not mistreat your body. Learn to handle it with respect. Do not look on your body as only an instrument. Preserve vital energies (sexual, breath, spirit) for the realization of the Way. (For brothers and sisters who are not monks and nuns:)

Sexual expression should not take place without love and commitment. In sexual relationships, be aware of future suffering that may be caused. To preserve the happiness of others, respect the rights and commitments of others. Be fully aware of the responsibility of bringing new lives into the world. Meditate on the world into which you are bringing new beings.



BODDHISATTVA VOWS

May I be a guard for those who are protector less

A guide for those who journey on the road.

For those who wish to cross the water,

May I be a boat, a raft, a bridge.

May I be an isle for those who yearn for land,

A lamp for those who long for light.

For all who need a resting place, a bed,

For those who need a servant, may I be their servant.

May I be the wishing jewel, the vase of plenty,

A word of power and the supreme healing.

May I be the tree of miracles,

And for every being, the abundant cow.

Just like the earth and all the elements

That endure like the sky itself endures,

For boundless multitudes of beings,

May I always be their ground and sustenance.



3 REFUGES

I take refuge in the buddha

I take refuge in the dharma

I take refuge in the sangha

3 PURE PRECEPTS

I vow to refrain from creating suffering

I vow to embrace all good

I vow to save all beings

10 CLEAR MIND PRECEPTS

1. No killing life / Cultivating and encouraging life
2. No stealing / Honoring the gift not yet given
3. No abusing sexuality / Remaining faithful in relationships
4. No illusory words / Communicating truth
5. No misuse of intoxicants / Polishing clarity
6. No dwelling on past mistakes / Creating wisdom from ignorance
7. No praise or blame / Maintaining non-judgemental modesty
8. No hoarding teachings or materials / Sharing understanding, freely giving of self
9. No harboring anger or ill will / Dwelling in equanimity
10. No abusing the three treasures / Respecting the Buddha,
unfolding the Dharma, nourishing the Sangha



DOSHI PROSTRATIONS

DOAN CHANTS THE EKO:

We vow to return their compassion and carry it to the future.
May its merits be directed towards:

Lasting peace in the sangha

Tranquility of daily practice

Dissolution of all misfortune

Fulfillment of all relations.

SANGHA CHANTS WITH THE DOAN:

All Buddhas in ten directions; past present and future;

All Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas, World Honored Ones

The

Maha

Prajna

Paramita



DHARANI TO ALLAY ALL DISASTERS

SHO SAI MYO KICHIJYO DHARANI

No Mo Sam Man Da Moto Nam 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

Chishu Ri Chishu Ri

Soha Ja Soha Ja

Sen Chi Gya Shiri Ei Somo Ko



FIRST GATHA

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

SECOND GATHA

May our intention equally extend to
Every being and place
With the true merit of Buddha's way.

Beings are numberless. I vow to serve 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.



THREE REFUGES

Buddham saranam gacchami

(I go to the Buddha for refuge.)

Dhammam saranam gacchami

(I go to the Dhamma for refuge.)

Sangham saranam gacchami

(I go to the Sangha for refuge.)

Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami

(For a second time, I go to the Buddha for refuge.)

Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami

(For a second time, I go to the Dhamma for refuge.)

Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami

(For a second time, I go to the Sangha for refuge.)

Tatiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami

(For a third time, I go to the Buddha for refuge.)

Tatiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami

(For a third time, I go to the Dhamma for refuge.)

Tatiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami

(For a third time, I go to the Sangha for refuge.)



IF *(By Rudyard Kipling)*

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:.

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!



CANTICLE TO BROTHER SUN *(By Paul Winter)*

(Based on St. Francis' Canticle)

All praise be yours through Brother Sun
All praise be yours through Sister Moon
By Mother Earth the Heart be praised
By Brother Mountain, Sister Sea
Through Brother Wind and Brother Air
Through Sister Water, Brother Fire
The Stars above give thanks to thee
All praise to those who live in Peace.

All praise be yours through Brother Wolf
All praise be yours through Sister Whale
By Nature's song the Heart be praised
By Brother Eagle, Sister Loon
Through Brother Tiger, Sister Seal
By Sister Flower, Brother Tree.
Let creatures all give thanks to thee
All praise to those who live in Peace.

Ask of the beasts and they shall teach you
The beauty of the Earth.
Ask of the trees and they shall teach you
The beauty of the Earth
Ask of the bees and they shall teach you
The beauty of the Earth
Ask of the flowers and they shall teach you
The beauty of the Earth

Brother Sun, Sister Moon
Brother Sun, Sister Moon

For the beauty of the Earth
Sing a song of Praise!



FUKAN ZAZENGI

(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 are still 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 to realize such, get to work on such right now.

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?

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FUKAN ZAZENGI

(Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen)

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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 together and lips 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 that 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?

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FUKAN ZAZENGI

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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 of direct pointing at the real. 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.