

Identity of Relative and Absolute

Shitou Xichien

The mind of the great sage of India
was intimately conveyed from west to east.
People's faculties may be sharp or dull,
But in the way there is no northern or southern ancestor.
The subtle source is clear and bright:
the tributary streams flow through the darkness.
To be attached to things is illusion:
To encounter the absolute is not yet enlightenment.
Each and all the subjective and objective spheres are related,
and at the same time independent.
Related, yet working differently,
though each keeps its own place,
Form makes the character and appearance different.
Sounds differ as pleasing or harsh.
The dark makes all words one;
the brightness distinguishes good and bad phrases.
The four elements return to their nature
as a child to its mother.
Fire is hot, wind moves,
water is wet, earth hard.
Eyes see, ears hear, nose smells,
tongue tastes the salt and sour.
Each is independent of the other.

Cause and effect must return to the great reality.
The words high and low are used relatively.
Within light there is darkness,
but do not try to understand that darkness.
Within darkness there is light, but do not look for that light.
Light and darkness are a pair,
like the foot before and the foot behind in walking.
Each thing has its own intrinsic value
and is related to everything else in function and position.
Ordinary life fits the absolute as a box and its lid.
The absolute works together with the relative
like two arrows meeting in midair.
Reading words you should grasp the great reality.
Do not judge by any standards.
If you do not see the way,
you do not see it even as you walk on it.
When you walk the way, it is not near, it is not far.
If you are deluded, you are mountains and rivers away from it.
I respectfully say to those who wish to be enlightened:
Do not waste your time by night or day.

Hakuin's Song of Zazen

From the very beginning, all beings are by nature buddha.
Like water and ice – without water, no ice – outside us no buddhas.
How near the truth yet how far we seek,
Like one in water crying, “I thirst.”
Like a child of rich birth wandering poor on this earth, we endlessly circle the six worlds.
The cause of our sorrow is ego delusion.
From dark path to dark path, we've wandered in darkness.
When shall we be free from birth and death?
The gateway to freedom is zazen samadhi –
Beyond exaltation, beyond all our praises,
The pure mahayana.
Upholding the precepts, repentance and giving,
Paramitas and virtue, the way of right living –
All come from zazen.
Thus one true samadhi extinguishes evils.
It purifies karma, dissolving obstructions.
Then where are the dark paths to lead us astray?
The pure lotus land is not far away.

Hearing this truth, heart humble and grateful,
To praise and embrace it, to practice its wisdom,
Brings unending blessings, brings mountains of merit.
And when we turn inward and prove our true nature – that true self is no-self, our own
self is no-self – we go beyond ego and past clever words.
Then the gate to the oneness of cause and effect is thrown open.
Not two and not three, straight ahead runs the way.
Our form now being no form, in going and returning we never leave home.
Our thought now being no-thought, our dancing and songs are the voice of the dharma.
How vast is the heaven of boundless samadhi!
How bright and transparent the moonlight of wisdom!
At this very moment, what is there outside us,
What is there we lack?
Nirvana is openly shown to our eyes.
This earth where we stand is the pure lotus land,
And this very body, the body of buddha.



Emmei Jikku Kannon Gyo
The Ten Verse Kannon Sutra of Timeless Life

Kanzeon
Na mu butsu
yo butsu u in
yo butsu u en
buppo so en
joraku ga jo
cho nen kanzeon
bo nen kanzeon
nen nen ju shin ki
nen nen fu ri shin

Kanzeon
Praise to Buddha
All are one with Buddha
All awake to Buddha
Buddha, Dharma, Sangha
Our True-nature is eternal, joyous, selfless and pure
Through the day Kanzeon
Through the night Kanzeon
Thought after thought arises in Mind
Thought after thought is not separate from Mind
Each moment itself is Mind ↓↑

Maka Hannya Haramita Shin Gyo
The Great Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra

Kan ji zai bo sa gyo jin han-nya har a 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 fu jo 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

The Bodhisattva of Compassion
from the depths of prajna wisdom
saw the emptiness of all five skandas
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.

Dharmas here are empty,
all are the primal void.
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 prajna 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 prajna 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:

Ga-te ga-te par-a-ga-te
para-sam ga-te
bod-hi sva-ha! ↓↑

Torei Zenji's Bodhisattva Vow

I am only a simple disciple,
But I offer these respectful words:
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,
With compassionate minds and hearts,
to beasts and birds.
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.

Furthermore, to be compassionate with ignorant people,
hateful and resentful, cursing, causing distress,

this 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,
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.