

Seven Thunders



Zen Buddhist Sutras

Abridged Selections for Monday Night Virtual Zendo

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EVENING

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.

(repeat 3 times)

EMMEI JIKKU KANNON GYO

(Ten Verse Kannon Sutra of Timeless Life)



KAN - ZE - ON!	Kanzeon!
NA MU 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 my affinity:
BUP-PO SO EN	affinity with Buddha, Dharma, Sangha;
JO -RAKU GA JO	constancy, ease, the self, and purity.
CHO NEN KAN-ZE-ON	Mornings my thought is Kanzeon;
BO NEN KAN-ZE-ON	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.

(repeat 7 times)

DEDICATION



Leader:

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 for all our many guides along
the ancient way.

Assembly:

All Buddhas throughout space and time;
All Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
the Great Prajna Paramita

Zazen

GREAT VOWS FOR ALL



The many beings are numberless,
I vow to save them.

Greed, hatred, and ignorance rise endlessly,
I vow to abandon them.

Dharma-gates are countless,
I vow to wake to them.

Buddha's Way is unsurpassed,
I vow to embody it fully.

(repeat 3 times)

TOREI ZENJI: BODHISATTVA'S VOW¹⁵



Leader:

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

Assembly:

When I regard the true nature of the many dharmas¹⁶
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,
with compassionate minds and hearts,
gave tender care 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.

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 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.

Raihai

HAKUIN ZENJI: SONG OF ZAZEN²²



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, practice –
the many other virtues –
all rise within zazen.

Those who try zazen even once
wipe away immeasurable crimes.
Where are all the dark paths then?
The Pure Land itself is near.

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 turn yourself about
and confirm your own self-nature –
self-nature that is no-nature –
you are far beyond mere argument.

The oneness of cause and effect is clear:
not two, not three, the path is straight;
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 right here, before our eyes.
This very place is the Lotus Land,
this very body, the Buddha.

HSIN HSIN MING: VERSES ON THE FAITH MIND²⁷

By Seng-ts'an



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.

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 thinking-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 to 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 (discriminating) 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 this 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.

Emptiness here, emptiness there,
but the infinite universe stands
always before your eyes.
Between the infinitely large and the infinitely small,
there is 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.

THE COINCIDENCE OF OPPOSITES²⁸

by Shih-t'ou Hsi-ch'ien



The mind of the great sage of India
is intimately conveyed from west to east.
Though people may be sharp-witted or dull,
there's no north and south in the Way.
The deep spring sparkles in the pure light,
its branches streaming through the darkness.
Grasping at phenomena is the source of delusion;
uniting with the absolute falls short of awakening.

All of the senses, all things sensed –
they interact without interaction.
Interacting, they permeate one another,
yet each remains in its own place.
By nature, forms differ in shape and appearance.
By nature, sounds bring pleasure or pain.
In darkness the fine and mediocre accord;
brightness makes clear and murky distinct.

Each element comes back to its own nature,
just as a child finds its own mother.
Fire is hot; the wind blows; water is wet and earth solid.
Eyes see forms; ears hear sounds; noses smell;
tongues tell salty from sour –
so it is with everything everywhere.

The root puts forth each separate shoot.
Both root and shoot go back to the fundamental fact.
Exalted and lowly is just a matter of words.
In the very midst of light, there is darkness;
don't meet another in darkness.
In the very midst of darkness there is light;
don't observe another in light.
Light and darkness complement each other,
like stepping forward and stepping back.

Each of the myriad things has its particular virtue,
inevitably expressed in its use and station.
Phenomena accord with the fundamental
as a lid fits its box;
the fundamental meets phenomena
like arrows in mid-air.

Hearing these words, understand the fundamental.
Don't cook up principles from your own ideas.
If you overlook the Way right before your eyes,
how will you know the path beneath your feet?

Advancing has nothing to do with near and far,
yet delusion creates obstacles high and wide.

Students of the mystery
I humbly urge you,
don't waste a moment ,
night or day!

METTA SUTRA²⁹



This is what should be done
by one who is skilled in goodness
and who knows the path of peace:
let such a one be able and upright,
straightforward and gentle in speech,
humble and not conceited,
contented and easily satisfied,
unburdened with duties
and frugal in all things,
peaceful and calm,
wise and skillful,
not proud and demanding in nature.

Let such a one not do the slightest thing
which the wise would later reprove.
In gladness and in safety,
may all beings be at ease,
whatever living beings there may be,
whether weak or strong, omitting none,
whether great and mighty, medium, short or small,
the seen and the unseen,
those living near or far away,
those born and not yet born,
may all beings be at ease!

Let none deceive another
or despise any being in any state.
Let none through anger or ill-will
wish harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life her only child,
so with a boundless heart
should one cherish all living beings,
radiating kindness over the entire world,
spreading upwards to the skies
and downwards to the depths,
outwards and unbounded,
freed from hatred and ill-will.

Whether standing or walking,
seated or lying down,
free from drowsiness,
one should sustain this recollection.
This is said to be the sublime abiding.
By not holding to fixed views,
the pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,
being freed from all sense desires,
is not born again into this world.

DAI E ZENJI:³⁹
VOW FOR AWAKENING



Our only prayer is to be firm in our determination
to give ourselves completely to the Buddha's Way,
so that no doubts arise,
however long the road seems to be;
to be light and easy in the four parts of the body;
to be strong and undismayed in body and in mind;
to be free from illness and to drive out
both depressed feelings and distraction;
to be free from calamity, misfortune,
harmful influences and obstructions;
not to seek the Truth outside of ourselves,
so we may instantly enter the right way;
to be unattached to all thoughts that we
may reach the perfectly clear mind of Prajna
and have immediate enlightenment on the Great Matter.

Thereby, we receive the transmission of the deep wisdom
of the Buddhas to save all sentient beings
who suffer in the round of birth and death.

In this way, we offer our gratitude for the
compassion of the Buddhas and the Patriarchs.

Our further prayer is not to be extremely ill
or to be suffering at the time of departure,
to know its coming seven days ahead,
so that we can quiet the mind to abandon the body
and be unattached to all things at the last moment
wherein we return to the Original Mind
of no birth and no death
and merge infinitely into the whole universe
to manifest as all things in their True Nature,
and with the great wisdom of the Buddhas ,
to awaken all beings to the Buddha Mind.

We offer this to all Buddhas and Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas
of the past, present and future
in the ten quarters
and to the Maha Prajna Paramita.

DAIO KOKUSHI: ON ZEN⁴⁰



There is a reality even prior to heaven and earth.

Indeed, it has no form, much less a name;
eyes fail to see it; it has no voice for ears to detect.

To call it Mind or Buddha violates its nature,
for it then becomes like a visionary flower in the air.

It is not Mind, not Buddha,
absolutely quiet, and yet illuminating
in a mysterious way.

It allows itself to be perceived only by the clear-eyed.

It is Dharma, truly beyond form and sound.

It is Tao, having nothing to do with words.

Wishing to entice the blind,
the Buddha has playfully let words escape
his golden mouth.

Heaven and earth are ever since filled
with entangling briars.

Oh my good, worthy friends gathered here,
if you desire to listen to the thunderous voice

of the Dharma,
exhaust your words, empty your thoughts,
for then you may come to recognize
this one essence.

EVENING

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.

(repeat 3 times)

EMMEI JIKKU KANNON GYO

(Ten Verse Kannon Sutra of Timeless Life)



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BUP-PO SO EN	affinity with Buddha, Dharma, Sangha;
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DEDICATION



Leader:

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

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the many beings of the world,
in grateful thanks for all our many guides along
the ancient way.

Assembly:

All Buddhas throughout space and time;
All Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas,
the Great Prajna Paramita

Zazen

GREAT VOWS FOR ALL



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Dharma-gates are countless,
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Buddha's Way is unsurpassed,
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(repeat 3 times)