

# Seven Thunders



Monday Evening  
Zen Buddhist  
Sutras

# THE COINCIDENCE OF OPPOSITES<sup>28</sup>

by Sekito Kisen



The mind of the great sage of India  
is intimately conveyed from west to east.  
Though people may be sharp-witted or dull,  
there is 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;  
do not meet another in darkness.  
In the very midst of darkness there is light;  
do not 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.  
Do not 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,  
do not waste a moment,  
night or day!

## METTA SUTRA<sup>29</sup>



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,  
achieves the Way and will be free  
from the duality of birth and death.

# LIBERATION FROM ALL OBSTRUCTIONS<sup>30</sup>

by Hogen Bays



In the presence of Sangha,  
in the light of Dharma,  
in oneness with Buddha,  
may my path to complete enlightenment  
benefit everyone.

In this passing moment  
karma ripens and all things come to be.

I vow to affirm what is:  
If there is cost, I choose to pay.  
If there is need, I choose to give.  
If there is pain, I choose to feel.  
If there is sorrow, I choose to grieve.  
When burning, I choose heat.  
When calm, I choose peace.  
When starving, I choose hunger.  
When happy, I choose joy.

Whom I encounter, I choose to meet.  
What I shoulder, I choose to bear.  
When it is my birth, I choose to live.  
When it is my death, I choose to die.  
Where this takes me, I choose to go.  
Being with what is, I respond to what is.

This life is as real as a dream;  
the one who knows it cannot be found.  
Truth is not a thing.  
Therefore, I vow to choose *this* Dharma entrance gate.  
May all Buddhas and Wise Ones  
help me live this vow.

# SONG OF THE JEWEL MIRROR SAMADHI<sup>31</sup>

by Tozan Ryokai



The teaching of thusness  
has been intimately communicated by  
Buddhas and Ancestors.  
Now you have it, so keep it well.

A silver bowl filled with snow,  
a heron hidden in the moonlight –  
when you compare them, they are not the same;  
when mixed together they find their place.<sup>32</sup>

The meaning is not in the words,  
yet it responds to the inquiring impulse.  
If you are excited, it becomes a pitfall.  
If you miss it, you fall into doubt and vacillation.  
Turning away and going towards are both wrong,  
for it is like a giant fireball.  
Expressing it in fancy words  
is to relegate it to defilement.

It is bright just at midnight,  
but in daylight it cannot be seen.<sup>33</sup>  
It acts as a guide for all beings.  
When used it liberates from suffering.  
Although it is not fabricated,  
it is not without expression.  
It is like facing a reflecting jewel:  
form and reflection behold each other.

You are not it.  
It actually is you.  
It is like a newborn child  
fully endowed with the five aspects:  
no going, no coming, no arising, no abiding.<sup>34</sup>  
It babbles:  
is there anything said or not?  
Ultimately, it says nothing,  
for the words are not yet right.<sup>35</sup>

In the illumination hexagram,  
the relative and absolute integrate.  
Piled up, they make three;  
the complete transformation makes five.  
It is like the taste of the five-flavored herb,  
like the diamond thunderbolt.<sup>36</sup>  
Wondrously embraced within the real,  
inquiry and response come together.

Communing with the source  
and communing with the process,  
it embraces the whole land and covers the roads.  
Merging is auspicious; do not violate it.<sup>37</sup>

Naturally real, yet inconceivable,  
It is not a matter of delusion or enlightenment.  
Following times and seasons of cause and effect,  
it shines brightly in stillness.  
In its fineness, it fits where there is no space.  
In its greatness, it transcends all dimensions.  
A hairsbreadth's deviation,  
and you are not in harmony with it.

Now there are "sudden" and "gradual"  
in connection with which are set up basic approaches.  
Once basic approaches are distinguished,  
then there are guiding rules;  
but even though the basis is reached and  
the approach comprehended,  
timeless truth flows forever.  
For those who are quiet of body but restless of mind,  
like a tethered colt or a trapped rat,  
the old masters had compassion  
and offered them the Dharma.

According to their delusions,  
they take black for white.  
But when delusional thinking ceases,  
the still, accepting mind is naturally present.

If you want to conform to the ancient way,  
please observe the ancients of former times.

When about to fulfill the way of Buddhahood,  
one gazed at a tree for ten aeons,<sup>38</sup>  
like a battle-scarred tiger or a hobbled horse.  
The more we feel inadequate,  
we reach for precious furniture and fine clothing.  
According to our fear or wonder,  
we see black cats or white oxen.

Yi with his great archer's skill  
could hit a target at a hundred paces;  
but when arrowpoints meet head on,  
what has this to do with the power of skill?<sup>39</sup>

When the wooden man begins to sing,  
the stone woman gets up to dance.  
It is not reached by feeling or discrimination.  
How could it be reached by deliberation in thought?

A minister serves the lord;  
children obey their parents.  
Not obeying is not filial  
and not serving is no help.

Practice secretly, working within,  
as though foolish and dull.  
When you able to persevere,  
you will be called a master among masters.

# GUIDEPOST OF SILENT ILLUMINATION<sup>40</sup>

by Wanshi Shokaku



Silent and serene, forgetting words,  
bright clarity appears before you.  
When you reflect it, you become vast;  
where you embody it,  
you are spiritually uplifted.

Solitary and shining,  
inner illumination restores wonder.

Dew in moonlight, a river of stars,  
snow covered pines, clouds enveloping the peak.  
In darkness it is most bright,  
while hidden all the more manifest.

The crane dreams in the wintery mists.  
The autumn waters flow far in the distance.

Endless kalpas are totally empty,  
all things completely the same.

When wonder exists in serenity,  
all achievement is forgotten in illumination.

What is this wonder?  
Alertly seeing through confusion  
is the way of silent illumination  
and the origin of subtle radiance.

Vision penetrating into subtle radiance  
is weaving gold on a jade loom.  
Upright and inclined yield to each other,  
light and dark are interdependent.

Not depending on sense faculty and object,  
at the right time they interact.  
Drink the medicine of good views.  
Beat the poison-smear drum.  
When they interact, killing and giving life are up to you.

Through the gate the self emerges  
and the branches bear fruit.

Only silence is the supreme speech,  
only illumination the universal response.

Responding without falling into achievement,  
speaking without involving listeners,  
the ten thousand forms majestically glisten  
and expound the Dharma.  
All objects certify it, each one in dialogue.

Conversing and certifying,  
they respond appropriately to each other;  
but if illumination neglects serenity  
then aggressiveness appears.  
Certifying and conversing they respond  
to each other appropriately;  
but if serenity neglects illumination,  
murkiness leads to wasted Dharma.

When silent illumination is fulfilled,  
the lotus blossoms, the dreamer awakens.

A hundred streams flow into the ocean,  
a thousand ranges face the highest peak.

Like geese preferring milk,  
like bees gathering nectar,  
when silent illumination reaches the ultimate,  
I offer my teaching.  
The teaching of silent illumination penetrates  
from the highest down to the foundation.

The body being empty,  
the arms are in activity.  
From the beginning to end  
the changing appearances  
and ten thousand differences share one pattern.

Facing changes has its principles;  
the great function is without striving.

The ruler stays in the kingdom;  
the general goes beyond the frontiers.

The affair of our school hits the mark straight and true.

Transmit it in all directions  
without desiring to gain recognition.

## THE FIVE REMEMBRANCES



I am of the nature to grow old;  
there is no way to escape growing old.

I am of the nature to have ill health;  
there is no way to escape having ill health.

I am of the nature to die;  
there is no way to escape death.

All that is dear to me and everyone I love  
are of the nature of change;  
there is no way to escape  
being separated from them.

My deeds are my closest companions;  
I am the beneficiary of my deeds.  
My deeds are the ground on which I stand.

## NIGHT CHANT

Even as the night darkens the green earth,  
the wheel turns.  
Death follows birth.  
Strive through the night with every breath,  
that you may wake  
past day, past death!



# SONG OF THE GRASS HUT HERMITAGE<sup>41</sup>

by Sekito Kisen



I built a grass hut where there is nothing of value.  
After it was completed, fresh weeds appeared.

Now it is lived in covered by weeds.  
After eating, I relax and enjoy a nap.

The person in the hut lives here calmly,  
not stuck to inside, outside, or in-between.

Places worldly people live, he does not live.  
Realms worldly people love, he does not love.  
Though the hut is small, it includes the entire world.

In ten feet square, an old person illumines forms  
and their nature.  
Thus this bodhisattva trusts without doubt.

The original master is present,  
not dwelling south or north, east or west.  
Firmly based in steadiness,  
it cannot be surpassed.

To a shining window below the green pines,  
jade palaces or vermilion towers cannot compare.

Just sitting with head covered,  
all things are at rest.  
Thus, this mountain monk does not understand at all.

Living here she no longer works to get free.  
Turn around the light to shine within;  
then just return.  
The vast inconceivable source  
cannot be faced or avoided.

Meet the ancestral teachers,  
be intimate with their instructions;  
bind grasses to build a hut,  
and do not give up.

Let go of hundreds of years and relax completely.  
Open your hands and walk – innocent.

Thousands of words, myriad interpretations,  
are only to free you from obstructions.

If you want to know the undying person in the hut,  
do not separate from this skin bag here and now.

# VOW FOR AWAKENING<sup>42</sup>

by Dai-e Soko



Our only prayer is to be firm in our determination  
to give ourselves completely to the Buddha 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 relinquish  
both depressed feelings and distractions;  
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  
so 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 free 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.

## ON ZEN

by Daio Kokushi<sup>43</sup>



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.

## FINAL ADMONITIONS

of Daito Kokushi<sup>44</sup>



You who have come to this mountain monastery,  
remember that you have gathered here  
for the sake of the Dharma,  
not for the sake of clothes and food.  
As long as you have shoulders, clothing will appear;  
as long as you have a mouth, food will come.

Just devote yourselves to facing the inconceivable,  
twenty-four hours a day.  
Time passes like an arrow.  
I warn you, do not distract your minds  
with miscellaneous affairs.

Be alert! Be alert!

After this old monk departs on his final pilgrimage,  
some of you may erect prosperous temples with pagodas,  
great halls, and sutras written in gold and silver.  
These may attract large crowds  
who loudly chant the sutras and dharanis.  
Or some of you may sit for long hours  
without lying down.  
You may eat only one meal a day,  
and practice ceaselessly throughout the day.

# DAILY SUTRA SERVICE

Even if you dedicate yourselves that way,  
unless you keep to the mysterious  
and untransmissible path of the Buddhas and Ancestors,  
you will be confronted by the sudden chaos  
of the law of causation.

Then true practice will fall away,  
and you will have joined the family of evil spirits!  
No matter how much time has passed  
since my departure from this world,  
you will never be allowed to call yourselves  
my Dharma descendants.

However, one of you may dwell  
in a hut thatched with one bundle of straw  
and pass the days eating the roots of wild herbs  
cooked in a broken-legged pot.

Devoted to digging into This Matter,  
you will never be apart from me.  
You are a true student of Dharma,  
requiting the beneficence you have received.  
Who would dare to belittle or despise such a one?

Exert yourselves! Exert yourselves!



Continuous Daily Practice

EVENING  
Raihai

Purification



All the harmful 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

# GREAT VOWS FOR ALL



The many beings are numberless,  
I vow to free 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)*

Raihai