

CHANTS & RECITATIONS

Great is the matter of birth and death

Life slips quickly by

Time waits for no one

Wake up! Wake up!

Don't waste a moment



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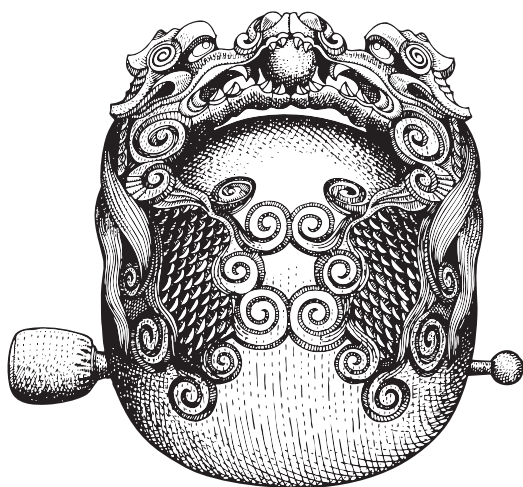
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CHANTS & RECITATIONS



Mind is unlimited.
Chanting when performed
egolessly has the power to
penetrate visible and invisible
worlds.

—Roshi Philip Kapleau

Some Pointers for Chanting

Chanting and the Zen Tradition

Zen chanting is another form of zazen and therefore differs from the chanting of many other spiritual traditions. Conscious awareness of the meaning of the words is unimportant; this meaning is absorbed on a subconscious level. Of primary importance is the mind-state created by the chanting—namely, absolute oneness to the point of self-forgetfulness.

The mealtime chants are an expression of gratitude both toward the many beings whose labors make our meal possible and for the nourishment that the meal provides.

How to Chant

To be effective, chanting must be clear, wholehearted, and concentrated. Performed in this way, it is a means of strengthening our samadhi power and deepening our understanding. Accordingly, our Buddha-nature will shine with greater luster in our daily life.

Each chanter finds their own lowest natural pitch—a note in the lowest part of one's range that can be maintained without strain. At the same time, it is important for one to blend in with the dominant pitch so that there is a harmonious unity. The words of the chants should flow together. If the syllables—particularly the consonants—are enunciated too precisely, the chanting becomes choppy. At the same time, care should be taken not to let the pitch rise and fall in a sing-song fashion.

Posture and Chanting

The preferred posture for chanting is seiza, or the traditional Japanese posture, i.e., kneeling with back straight and buttocks resting on the heels. The knees should be two fist-widths apart to reduce strain. It is important to keep the body relaxed, especially the shoulders, chest, and throat. Tight or constricting clothing should be loosened.

The energy for chanting comes from the hara (lower abdomen) with the sound resonating in the chest and head cavities. Thus it will not help to tighten or tense the vocal cords, as this will only cause a more constricted sound. Do not sway or rock during the chanting, but maintain a taut, erect posture. During all the chants the position of the hands is similar to the zazen mudra, but with the thumbs resting next to each other. The hands are placed palm to palm during the *Return of Merit*, the *Ancestral chants*, the *Ten Directions*, and the *Four Vows*.

The mokugyo (wooden fish drum) sets the cadence for the chants. Follow the beat of the mokugyo and adjust to its changes in rhythm at the beginning and end of the chants. Usually there is one beat for each syllable chanted.

Notes

At the back of the book are a number of notes intended to promote facility in chanting and to make the chants more meaningful.

Daily Chants



The Three Treasures

I take refuge in Buddha,
and resolve that with all beings
I will understand the Great Way
whereby the Buddha seed may forever thrive.

I take refuge in Dharma,
and resolve that with all beings
I will enter deeply into the sutra-treasure
whereby my wisdom may grow as vast as the ocean.

I take refuge in Sangha,
and in its wisdom, example, and never-failing help,
and resolve to live in harmony with all sentient beings.

Heart of Perfect Wisdom

(Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya)

The Bodhisattva of Compassion
from the depths of prajñā wisdom
saw the emptiness of all five skandhas
and sundered the bonds that cause all 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 prajñā 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 prajñā wisdom,
come to full enlightenment.
Know then the great dharani,
the radiant, peerless mantra,
the supreme, unfailing mantra,
the Prajñā Pāramitā,
whose words allay all pain.
This is highest wisdom,
true beyond all doubt;
know and proclaim its truth:

Gate, gate
pāragate
pārasamgate
bodhi, svāhā!

गते गते पारगते पारसंगते बोधि स्वाहा

Ten-Verse Kannon Sutra

(Emmei Jikku Kannon Gyō)

Kanzeon!

Praise to Buddha!

All are one with Buddha;

all awake to Buddha.

Buddha, Dharma, Sangha—
eternal, joyous, selfless, pure.

Through the day Kanzeon—
through the night Kanzeon.

This moment arises from Mind;
this moment itself is Mind.

Shōsai Myōkichijō Darani

(Disaster-Preventing Dharani)

No mo san 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
chishu sa chishu sa
chishu ri chishu ri
sowa ja sowa ja
sen chi gya
shiri ei somo ko.

Daihishin Darani

(Great Compassion Dharani)

Namu kara tan no
tora ya ya
namu ori ya
boryo ki chi shifu ra ya
fuji sato bo ya
moko sato bo ya
mo ko kya runi kya ya
en
sa hara ha e shu tan no ton sha
namu shiki ri toi mo
ori ya
boryo ki chi
shifu 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
ru 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
shifu 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 zan
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
nora kin ji
chiri shuni no
hoya mono

somo ko
shido ya
somo ko
moko shido ya
somo ko
shido yu ki
shifu ra ya
somo ko
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
shifu ra ya
somo ko
shite do modo ra
hodo ya
so mo ko.

Return of Merit

(Honzon Ekō)

LEADER:

*Faith in Buddha, Dharma, Sangha
brings true liberation.*

We now return the merit of our chanting to:

Shākyamuni Buddha,

Mañjushrī Bodhisattva,

Avalokita Bodhisattva,

Bhadra Bodhisattva.

We place our faith in the Great Heart of Perfect Wisdom.

May all beings attain Buddhahood!

ALL:

Ten Directions, Three Worlds,

All Buddhas, Bodhisattva-mahāsattvas,

Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā.

The Ancestral Line

(Soshi Ekō)

LEADER:

*O Awakened Ones! May the power of your samadhi
sustain us. We now return the merit of our chanting to:*

ALL:

Vipashyin Buddha, Honored One
Shikhin Buddha, Honored One
Vishvabhū Buddha, Honored One
Krakucchanda Buddha, Honored One
Kanakamuni Buddha, Honored One
Kāshyapa Buddha, Honored One
Shākyamuni Buddha, Honored One

Mahākāshyapa, Honored One
Ānanda, Honored One
Shanavāsa, Honored One
Upagupta, Honored One
Dhritaka, Honored One
Miccaka, Honored One
Vasumitra, Honored One
Buddhanandi, Honored One
Buddhamitra, Honored One
Bhikshu Pārshva, Honored One
Punyayashas, Honored One
Ashvaghoṣha, Honored One
Kapimala, Honored One

Nāgārjuna, Honored One
 Kānadeva, Honored One
 Rāhulata, Honored One
 Sanghānandi, Honored One
 Gayashāta, Honored One
 Kumārata, Honored One
 Jayata, Honored One
 Vasubandhu, Honored One
 Manorhita, Honored One
 Haklenayashas, Honored One
 Bhikshu Simha, Honored One
 Basiasita, Honored One
 Punyamitra, Honored One
 Prajñātāra, Honored One
 Bodhidharma, Honored One

 Dazu Huike, Honored One
 (*Da-dzoo Hway-kuh*)
 Jianzhi Sengcan, Honored One
 (*Jen-jrr Sung-tsan*)
 Dayi Daoxin, Honored One
 (*Da-yee Dao-syin*)
 Daman Hongren, Honored One
 (*Da-man Hoong-ren*)
 Dajian Huineng, Honored One
 (*Da-jen Hway-mung*)
 Qingyuan Xingsi, Honored One
 (*Ching-yuen Sing-si*)
 Shitou Xiqian, Honored One
 (*Shrrr-toe See-chen*)

Yaoshan Weiyan, Honored One
(*Yao-shan Way-yen*)
Yunyan Tansheng, Honored One
(*Yun-yen Tan-shung*)
Dongshan Liangjie, Honored One
(*Doong-shan Liang-jyeh*)
Yunju Daoying, Honored One
(*Yoon-jee Dao-ying*)
Tongan Daopi, Honored One
(*Toong-an Dao-pee*)
Tongan Guanzhi, Honored One
(*Toong-an Gwan-jrr*)
Liangshan Yuanguan, Honored One
(*Liang-shan Yuen-gwan*)
Dayang Jingxuan, Honored One
(*Da-yong Jing-swan*)
Touzi Yiqing, Honored One
(*Toe-dzz Yee-ching*)
Furong Daokai, Honored One
(*Foo-roong Dao-kai*)
Danxia Zichun, Honored One
(*Dan-syah Dzz-choon*)
Zhenxie Qingliao, Honored One
(*Jen-syeh Ching-liaow*)
Tiantong Zongjue, Honored One
(*Tyen-toong Zoong-jway*)
Xuedou Zhijian, Honored One
(*Sweh-doe Jrr-jen*)
Tiantong Rujing, Honored One
(*Tyen-toong Roo-jing*)

Eihei Dōgen, Honored One
Koun Ejō, Honored One
Tettsū Gikai, Honored One
Keizan Jōkin, Honored One
Meihō Sotetsu, Honored One
Shugan Dōchin, Honored One
Tessan Shikaku, Honored One
Keigan Eishō, Honored One
Juzan Ryōun, Honored One
Gizan Tōnin, Honored One
Shōgaku Kenryū, Honored One
Kinen Hōryū, Honored One
Daishitsu Chisen, Honored One
Gukei Shōjun, Honored One
Sessō Yūho, Honored One
Kaiten Genjū, Honored One
Shūzan Shunshō, Honored One
Chōzan Genetsu, Honored One
Fukushū Kōchi, Honored One
Myōdo Yūton, Honored One
Hakuhō Genteki, Honored One
Gesshū Sōko, Honored One
Tokuō Ryōkō, Honored One
Hōgan Soren, Honored One
Sekisō Tesshū, Honored One
Ryūkō Ryōshū, Honored One
Renzan Sohō, Honored One
Motsugai Shidō, Honored One
Gukei Yōun, Honored One

Kakushō Sodō, Honored One
Daiun Sogaku, Honored One
Hakuun Ryōkō, Honored One
Zentetsu Kapleau, Honored One

LEADER:

*... and to the unsung women,
centuries of enlightened ones,
whose commitment to the Dharma
nourishes and sustains our practice—
you who have handed down the light of Dharma,
we shall repay your benevolence!*

The Ancestral Line

(Abbreviated Version)

Vipashyin Buddha, Honored One
Shikhin Buddha, Honored One
Vishvabhū Buddha, Honored One
Krakucchanda Buddha, Honored One
Kanakamuni Buddha, Honored One
Kāshyapa Buddha, Honored One
Shākyamuni Buddha, Honored One

Mahākāshyapa, Honored One
Ānanda, Honored One
Ashvaghoṣa, Honored One
Nāgārjuna, Honored One
Vasubandhu, Honored One
Bodhidharma, Honored One

Dazu Huike, Honored One
(*Da-dzoo Hway-kuh*)
Jianzhi Sengcan, Honored One
(*Jen-jrr Sung-tsan*)
Dajian Huineng, Honored One
(*Da-jen Hway-nung*)

Eihei Dōgen, Honored One
Daiun Sogaku, Honored One
Hakuun Ryōkō, Honored One
Zentetsu Kapleau, Honored One.

Homage to Dharma Ancestors

Vipashyin Buddha, Honored One
Shikhin Buddha, Honored One
Vislvabhū Buddha, Honored One
Krakucchanda Buddha, Honored One
Kanakamuni Buddha, Honored One
Kāshyapa Buddha, Honored One
Shākyamuni Buddha, Honored One

Mahākāshyapa, Honored One
Mahāprajāpatī, Honored One
Ānanda, Honored One
Ashvaghoṣa, Honored One
Nāgārjuna, Honored One
Vasubandhu, Honored One
Bodhidharma, Honored One

Dazu Huike, Honored One
(*Da-dzoo Hway-kuh*)

Zongji, Honored One
(*Dzoong-jee*)

Jianzhi Sengcan, Honored One
(*Jen-jrr Sung-tsan*)

Dajian Huineng, Honored One
(*Da-jen Hway-nung*)

Nanyang Huizhong, Honored One
(*Nan-yang Hway-joong*)

Mazu Daoyi, Honored One
(*Ma-dzoo Dao-yee*)
Shitou Xiqian, Honored One
(*Shrrr-toe See-chen*)
Baizhang Huaihai, Honored One
(*Bai-jang Hwigh-high*)
Pang Yun, Honored One
(*Pahng Yoon*)
Pang Lingzhao, Honored One
(*Pahng Ling-jaow*)
Nanquan Puyuan, Honored One
(*Nan-chuen Poo-yuen*)
Zhaozhou Congshen, Honored One
(*Jaow-jo Tsoong-shen*)
Ling Xingpo, Honored One
(*Ling Sing-po*)
Huangbo Xiyun, Honored One
(*Hwang-bo Shee-yoon*)
Changsha Jingcen, Honored One
(*Chang-sha Jing-tsen*)
Daowu Yuanzhi, Honored One
(*Dao-woo Yuan-jrr*)
Guishan Lingyou, Honored One
(*Gway-shan Ling-yo*)
Longtan Chongxin, Honored One
(*Loong-tan Choong-shin*)
Deshan Xuanjian, Honored One
(*Deh-shan Swen-jen*)

Liu Tiemo, Honored One
(*Lyoo Tyeh-mo*)
Dongshan Liangjie, Honored One
(*Doong-shan Liang-jyeh*)
Moshan Liaoran, Honored One
(*Mo-shan Liaow-rahn*)
Linji Yixuan, Honored One
(*Lin-jee Yee-swan*)
Yangshan Huiji, Honored One
(*Yahng-shan Hway-jee*)
Miao Xin, Honored One
(*Miaow Syin*)
Xiangyan Zhixian, Honored One
(*Siang-yen Jrr-syen*)
Sansheng Huiran, Honored One
(*San-shung Hway-rahn*)
Yantou Quanhua, Honored One
(*Yen-toe Chuen-huo*)
Xuefeng Yicun, Honored One
(*Shweh-fung Yee-tsoon*)
Caoshan Benji, Honored One
(*Tsaow-shan Ben-jee*)
Changqing Huileng, Honored One
(*Chang-ching Hway-lung*)
Yunmen Wenyan, Honored One
(*Yoon-men Wen-yen*)
Dongshan Shouchu, Honored One
(*Doong-shan Sho-choo*)

Fengxue Yanzhao, Honored One
 (*Fung-sway Yen-jaow*)
 Fayan Wenyi, Honored One
 (*Fa-yen Wen-yee*)
 Shoushan Xingnian, Honored One
 (*Sho-shan Sing-nyen*)
 Shishuang Qingzhu, Honored One
 (*Shrr-shwang Ching-joo*)
 Hongzhi Zhengjue, Honored One
 (*Hoong-jrr Jung-jueh*)
 Yuanwu Keqin, Honored One
 (*Yuen-woo Kuh-chin*)
 Dahui Zonggao, Honored One
 (*Da-hway Zoong-gaow*)
 Xuedou Chongxian, Honored One
 (*Shweh-doe Choong-syen*)
 Bojo Chinul, Honored One
 Wumen Huikai, Honored One
 (*Woo-men Hway-kai*)
 Tiantong Rujing, Honored One
 (*Tyen-toong Roo-jing*)
 Eihei Dogen, Honored One
 Mugai Nyodai, Honored One
 Keizan Jokin, Honored One
 Muso Soseki, Honored One
 Taego Bou, Honored One
 (*Tay-go Bo-oo*)
 Bassui Tokushō, Honored One
 Yodo-ni, Honored One

Ikkyu Sojun, Honored One
Bankei Yotaku, Honored One
Hakuin Ekaku, Honored One
Satsujo, Honored One
Torei Enji, Honored One
Xuyun, Honored One

(Syoo-yoon)

Kusan Sunim, Honored One
Daiun Sogaku, Honored One
Hakuun Ryoko, Honored One
Zentetsu Kapleau, Honored One

LEADER:

*... and to the unsung ancestors,
centuries of enlightened ones,
whose commitment to the Dharma
nourishes and sustains our practice—
you who have handed down the light of Dharma,
we shall repay your benevolence!*

Affirming Faith in Mind

(Xin Xin Ming)

The Great Way is not difficult
for those who do not pick and choose.

When preferences are cast aside,
the Way stands clear and undisguised.

But even slight distinctions made
set earth and heaven far apart.

If you would clearly see the truth,
discard opinions pro and con.

To founder in dislike and like
is nothing but the mind's disease.

And not to see the Way's deep truth
disturbs the mind's essential peace.

The Way is perfect like vast space,
where there's no lack and no excess.

Our choice to choose and to reject
prevents our seeing this simple truth.

Both striving for the outer world
as well as for the inner void
condemn us to entangled lives.

Just calmly see that all is One,
and by themselves false views will go.

Attempts to stop activity
will fill you with activity.

Remaining in duality,
you'll never know of unity.

And not to know this unity
lets conflict lead you far astray.

When you assert that things are real,
you miss their true reality.

But to assert that things are void
also misses reality.

The more you talk and think on this
the further from the truth you'll be.

Cut off all useless thoughts and words,
and there's nowhere you cannot go.

Returning to the root itself,
you'll find the meaning of all things.

If you pursue appearances,
you overlook the primal source.

Awakening is to go beyond
both emptiness as well as form.

All changes in this empty world
seem real because of ignorance.

Do not go searching for the truth,
just let those fond opinions go.

Abide not in duality;
refrain from all pursuit of it.

If there's a trace of right and wrong,
True-mind is lost, confused, distraught.

From One-mind comes duality,
but cling not even to this One.

When this One-mind rests undisturbed,
then nothing in the world offends.

And when no thing can give offense,
then all obstructions cease to be.

If all thought-objects disappear,
the thinking subject drops away.

For things are things because of mind,
as mind is mind because of things.

These two are merely relative,
and both at source are Emptiness.

In Emptiness these are not two,
yet in each are contained all forms.

Once coarse and fine are seen no more,
then how can there be taking sides?

The Great Way is without limit,
beyond the easy and the hard.

But those who hold to narrow views
are fearful and irresolute;
their frantic haste just slows them down.

If you're attached to anything,
you surely will go far astray.

Just let go now of clinging mind,
and all things are just as they are:
In essence nothing goes or stays.

See into the true self of things,
and you're in step with the Great Way,
thus walking freely, undisturbed.

But live in bondage to your thoughts,
and you will be confused, unclear.

This heavy burden weighs you down—
so why keep judging good and bad?

If you would walk the highest Way,
do not reject the sense domain.

For as it is, whole and complete,
this sense world is Enlightenment.

The wise do not strive after goals;
the foolish put themselves in bonds.

The One Way knows no differences;
the foolish cling to this and that.

To seek Great Mind with thinking mind
is certainly a grave mistake.

From small mind come rest and unrest,
but mind awakened transcends both.

Delusion spawns dualities—
these dreams are merely flowers of air—
why work so hard at grasping them?

Both gain and loss, and right and wrong—
once and for all get rid of them.

When you no longer are asleep,
all dreams will vanish by themselves.

If mind does not discriminate,
all things are as they are, as One.

To go to this mysterious Source
frees us from all entanglements.

When all is seen with ‘equal mind,’
to our Self-nature we return.

This single mind goes right beyond
all reasons and comparison.

Make movement rest, and nothing moves;
see rest in motion—there’s no rest.

When rest and movement cease to be,
then even oneness disappears.

This ultimate finality,
beyond all laws, can’t be described.

With single mind one with the Way,
all ego-centered strivings cease;

Doubts and confusion disappear,
and so true faith pervades our life.

There is no thing that clings to us,
and nothing that is left behind.

All's self-revealing, void and clear,
without exerting power of mind.

Thought cannot reach this state of truth,
here feelings are of no avail.

In this true world of Emptiness,
both self and other are no more.

To enter this true empty world,
immediately affirm 'not-two.'

In this 'not-two' all is the same,
with nothing separate or outside.

The wise in all times and places
awaken to this primal truth.

The Way's beyond all space, all time;
one instant is ten thousand years.

Not only here, not only there,
truth's right before your very eyes.

Distinctions such as large and small
have relevance for you no more.

The largest is the smallest too—
here limitations have no place.

What is is not, what is not is—
if this is not yet clear to you,
you're still far from the inner truth.

One thing is all, all things are one—
know this and all's whole and complete.

When faith and Mind are not separate,
and not separate are Mind and faith,
this is beyond all words, all thought.

For here there is no yesterday,
no tomorrow,
no today.

The Harmony of Relative and Absolute

(Cantongqi or Sandōkai)

The Mind of the great sage of India
is intimately conveyed from West to East.
Though humans may be sharp or dull,
the Way has no northern or southern ancestors.
The subtle source is clear and bright.
The branching streams flow through the dark.
To attach to things is delusion.
To encounter the absolute is not yet enlightenment.
Each sense gate is related to its field
and yet independent,
related and interacting,
though each keeps its own place.
Forms differ in their character;
forms differ in appearances.
Sounds may be pleasant or harsh.
The dark makes all words one;
light distinguishes good and bad phrases.
The four elements return to their true 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,
like leaves that come from one root.

Root and branches return to the great reality.
‘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 try to find that light.
Light and darkness are a pair,
like the foot before and the foot behind in walking.
Each thing has its own intrinsic worth,
and relates to everything else in function and
position.
Everyday life fits the absolute as a box and its lid.
The absolute and relative work together
like two arrows meeting in mid-air.
Hear these words and grasp the great reality.
Do not judge by your own 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.
To those who wish to be enlightened,
I respectfully say,
‘Do not waste your time by night or by day.’

Master Hakuin's Chant in Praise of Zazen

(Zazen Wasan)

From the very beginning all beings are 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.

How can 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,
the countless good deeds,
and 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!

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.

The Four Bodhisattvic Vows

All beings, without number,
I vow to liberate.

Endless blind passions
I vow to uproot.

Dharma gates, beyond measure,
I vow to penetrate.

The Great Way of Buddha
I vow to attain.

Verse of the Rakusu

Wondrous is the robe of liberation,
a treasure beyond form and emptiness.
Wearing it I will unfold Buddha's teaching
for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Meal Chants



The Five Reflections

(hands palm-to-palm)

LEADER:

*With all that lives
let us honor the Three Treasures.
Let us recall the exertions
of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.*

(clappers)

ALL:

This meal is the labor of countless beings—
let us remember their toil.
Defilements are many and exertions weak—
do we deserve this offering?
Gluttony stems from greed—
let us be moderate.
Our lives are sustained by this offering—
let us be grateful.
We take this food to attain the Buddha Way.

*(Food is served—put a piece of dry food aside for the hungry
ghost dish when it is passed around and have some liquid in
your cup for the thirsty spirit offering.)*

Verse of the Main Meal

(clappers—all with raised bowls or plates)

LEADER:

Our meal is offered ...

ALL:

... to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.
With teachers and family,
with nations and all life,
let us equally share.
To beings throughout the six worlds
we offer this meal.

Offering to the Hungry Ghosts

(clappers—hands palm-to-palm)

ALL:

All hungry ghosts!
All tortured spirits!
Now we give you this Dharma-food.
May it fill the ten directions
and satisfy hunger in realms of darkness.

All hungry ghosts!
All tortured spirits!
Abandon greed
and rouse the desire for enlightenment!

Offering to the Thirsty Spirits

(clappers—hands palm-to-palm)

ALL:

To you spirits tortured by thirst
we give this liquid offering.
May your thirst be relieved,
may your suffering diminish.
May all beings attain Buddhahood!

Other Chants and Recitations



The Three Treasures

I take refuge in Buddha,
and resolve that with all beings
I will understand the Great Way
whereby the Buddha seed may forever thrive.

I take refuge in Dharma,
and resolve that with all beings
I will enter deeply into the sutra-treasure
whereby my wisdom may grow as vast as the ocean.

I take refuge in Sangha,
and in its wisdom, example, and never-failing help,
and resolve to live in harmony with all sentient beings.

The Three General Resolutions

I resolve to do no harm.

I resolve to do good.

I resolve to liberate all sentient beings.

The Ten Cardinal Precepts

1. I resolve not to kill,
but to cherish all life.
2. I resolve not to take what is not given,
but to respect the things of others.
3. I resolve not to misuse sexuality,
but to be caring and responsible.
4. I resolve not to lie,
but to speak the truth.
5. I resolve not to cause others to abuse alcohol or
drugs, nor to do so myself,
but to keep the mind clear.
6. I resolve not to speak of the faults of others,
but to be understanding and sympathetic.
7. I resolve not to praise myself and disparage others,
but to overcome my own shortcomings.
8. I resolve not to withhold spiritual or material aid,
but to give them freely where needed.
9. I resolve not to indulge in anger,
but to practice forbearance.
10. I resolve not to revile the Three Treasures,
but to cherish and uphold them.

Memorial Prayer

O Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,
abiding in all directions,
endowed with great compassion, endowed with love,
affording protection to sentient beings,
consent through the power of your great compassion
to come forth.

O Compassionate Ones,
you who possess the wisdom of understanding, the
love of compassion,
the power of protecting in incomprehensible measure,
[*name of deceased*] is passing from this world to the next.
She is taking a great leap.
The light of this world has faded for her.
She has entered solitude with her karmic forces.
She has gone into a vast Silence.
She is borne away by the Great Ocean of birth
and death.

O Compassionate Ones,
protect [*name of deceased*], who is defenseless.
Be to her like a father and a mother.

O Compassionate Ones,
Let not the force of your compassion be weak, but
aid her.
Forget not your ancient vows.

*(Change the pronouns and verbs as appropriate to
the deceased.)*

Mantra of Bhaisajyaguru, Buddha of Healing

Na-mo bha-ga-va-te
bhai-sa-jya-gu-ru
vai-dū-rya
pra-bhā-rā-jā-ya
ta-thā-ga-tā-ya
ar-ha-te
sam-yak-sam-bud-dhā-ya
ta-dya-thā om
bhai-sa-jye
bhai-sa-jye
bhai-sa-jya
sam-mud-ga-te
svā-hā.

Emmei Jikku Kannon Gyō

(Ten-Verse Kannon Sutra in Japanese)

Kanzeon
namu butsu
yo butsu u in
yo butsu u en
buppō sō en
jōraku ga jō
chō nen kanzeon
bō nen kanzeon
nen nen jū shin ki
nen nen fu ri shin.

Dharani of Jizō Bodhisattva

Om ka ka kabi san ma e sowa ka.

Sesshin Evening Ritual

Even as night darkens the green earth, the wheel turns.
Death follows birth.

Strive as you sleep with every breath,
that you may wake past day, past death!

Notes

The Three Treasures (pp. 10 and 50): The sentences in roman are chanted by all; the remainder of each of the Three Treasures is chanted by the lead chanter while the rest of those present do a prostration.

Prajñā Pāramitā Hridaya (p. 11): The Heart Sutra represents the core or kernel of the Buddha's teaching and is considered the most potent formulation for piercing the delusive mind.

In the Sanskrit mantra at the end of the sutra, the pronunciation of short 'a' is very reduced, so that the first syllable is pronounced almost as the English word 'gut,' while the syllable 'sam' is pronounced as the English word 'sung,' with the pronunciation of the 'm' changing to 'ng' before the following letter 'g.' The long 'a,' on the other hand, is quite open, as 'a' in 'father.' Thus, the pronunciation of the whole may be represented as follows:

Gut-ay gut-ay
pah-ra gut-ay
pahra sung-gut-ay
bo-dhi svah-hah!

The mantra may be rendered into English as follows:

Gone, gone,
gone beyond,
gone fully beyond,
O Awakening: hail!

Ten-Verse Kannon Sutra (pp. 13, 53): A highly revered bodhisattva in Mahayana teaching, the Bodhisattva Kannon or Kanzeon is known in Sanskrit as Avalokiteshvara, and in Chinese as Guanyin (sometimes romanized as Kuan Yin or Kwan Yin). With her deep compassionate nature and sensitivity to suffering, the name Kannon means 'one who hears the cries of the world.' Although originally masculine, Kannon is depicted in various forms across

cultures, including as feminine or androgynous and as having a multitude of eyes and arms.

Shōsai Myōkichijō Darani and *Dailishin Darani* (pp. 14 and 15): In *The Three Pillars of Zen* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), Roshi Philip Kapleau writes, ‘As phonetic transliterations of Sanskrit words, dharani have doubtlessly lost much of their profound meaning through the inevitable alterations of the original sounds. But as anyone who has recited them for any length of time knows, in their effect on the spirit they are anything but meaningless.’ (p. 21)

Return of Merit (p. 18): Mañjushrī—the Bodhisattva of Wisdom—represents awakening, that is, the sudden realization of the Oneness of all existence, while the Bodhisattva Bhadra or Samantabhadra embodies calm action and the compassion that manifests itself through employing the knowledge gained by virtue of awakening for the benefit of humanity. Accordingly, Mañjushrī and Samantabhadra represent, respectively, Oneness (or Equality) and manyness. Avalokita or Avalokiteshvara—the Bodhisattva of Compassion—represents all-embracing love and benevolence. The ‘ten directions’ encompass the whole cosmos—the eight cardinal and intermediate points of the compass, as well as the zenith and nadir. The ‘three worlds’ refer to a classification of reality according to Buddhist cosmology: In ascending order these are the worlds of Desire, Form, and Non-Form. These may also be viewed as dimensions of human consciousness. See *The Three Pillars of Zen*, pp. 417–424.

Ancestral chants (pp. 19–31): The stressed syllables in the Sanskrit names are italicized. The Chinese names are given twice, first in the standard Pinyin romanization and then parenthetically in a phonetic romanization.

Homage to Dharma Ancestors (p. 27): For many years, the official ancestral line of the Zen Soto School was chanted at the Rochester Zen Center. This chant purports to trace the passing on of the Buddhadharma from master to master, starting with the mythical

Buddhas who came before our historical cycle and ending with the Founder of our Center, Roshi Philip Kapleau (Zentetsu Kapleau), who was added to the roll upon his death. Part of the beauty of this Zen ‘hall of fame’ is that it highlights our connection with and gratitude to a chain of great masters stretching back beyond human memory. However, that notion of a chain of unbroken transmission is largely a fiction and not true to the more messy and nuanced reality of how Zen has been passed down.

Scholars have pointed out that many of the links in this official chain were manufactured by the myth-makers of later generations, at times connecting masters who never met. In giving up the simplicity of a single line of transmission, our *Homage to Dharma Ancestors* chant acknowledges and gives thanks to many more of the great forebears of Zen. These include the great Chinese masters of the Rinzai line, such as Linji (the founder of that school), Zhaozhou, Yunmen, and many others. It also provides the opportunity to recognize some of the great Korean Zen masters. Finally, of special importance, it includes some of the great women masters whose contributions have been marginalized by traditional Asian male-to-male lineages.

Any such list of masters is by necessity somewhat arbitrary. Nevertheless, it feels truer to history to be able to chant in praise of this wider, if still incomplete, selection of those ‘who have handed down the light of Dharma.’ To learn more about the history of Zen ancestors, there are a number of brief biographies at rzc.org/Dharma-Ancestors/.

Affirming Faith in Mind (p. 32): *Xin Xin Ming* (*Affirming Faith in Mind* or *Verses on the Faith-Mind*) was written by Sengcan, the third Zen ancestor, and is believed to be the first Chinese Zen document.

The Harmony of Relative and Absolute (p. 39): *The Cantongqi* (Ch.) or *Sandōkai* (Jap.) was written by Shitou Xiqian, whose lineage is one of two composing ‘the root of all subsequent Zen schools and lineages down to the present day.’ *Zen’s Chinese Heritage* by Andy Ferguson (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011), p. 71.

Verse of the Rakusu (p. 43): The rakusu is a rectangular vestment sewn in the same pattern used in making both the robes of Theravada monks and the kesa, or shoulder cloth, worn as a formal garment by Mahayana priests. The *Verse of the Rakusu* is recited in Soto Zen assemblies at dawn when the priests put on their kesas and lay people their rakusus.

Hungry Ghosts and Thirsty Spirits (p. 47): These constitute the second-lowest of the Six Realms of Unenlightened Existence, just above that of Hell. This purgatory-like state is one of burning desire, its inhabitants having consigned themselves to it through their own cravings. Viewed literally, these ‘hungry shadows’ co-exist with human beings while yet remaining mostly invisible to us, and the morsel of food we offer is to allay their suffering and to be reminded of those in the world who are starving.

Understood psychologically, this realm represents insatiable longing as a state of mind. Our offering in the meal chants then becomes a way of acknowledging our own various addictions and other unfulfilled cravings, however faint, and in doing so gaining some freedom from them. In performing the actual ritual (described below), we are in effect declaring, ‘You have been seen. Now accept this, if you will—and be gone!’

While the ‘hungry ghost’ verse is being chanted, a bowl is passed from the head of the table. At the same time each person takes a small piece of dry food between the thumb and third finger of the right hand and circles the hand three times in a clockwise direction over their plate of food. When the bowl arrives, the small piece of food is placed in the bowl, which is then passed to the next person, and so on down the line.

While the ‘thirsty spirit’ verse is being chanted, a bowl is passed down from the head of the table. When it arrives at a place between two people, each places a hand partly over the mouth of their cup. A small amount of liquid is then poured from the cup into the bowl, which is then passed to the next two people down the line, and so on.

The Three Treasures, Three General Resolutions, and Ten Cardinal Precepts (pp. 50–51): One is formally initiated as a Zen Buddhist through participation in the ceremony of *Jukai*, or receiving the

precepts, wherein one pledges to give oneself to the Three Treasures, makes the Three General Resolutions, and pledges to keep the Ten Cardinal Precepts.

Memorial Prayer (p. 52): A usual memorial service is to chant the Heart of Perfect Wisdom twice, the Ten-Verse Kannon Sutra seven times, the Shōsai Myōkichijō Darani five times, the Daihishin Darani once, and then to recite the Memorial Prayer thrice. It is helpful to have a picture of the deceased on the altar. Traditionally the memorial service is done for seven days after a person's death, then each week on the day of death for the next six weeks (i.e., ending on the forty-ninth day), and then on the yearly anniversary of death.

Mantra of Bhaisajyaguru (p. 53): For ease in chanting, the mantra is printed here syllable by syllable. In the syllable combination 'sam-yak,' the pronunciation of the 'm' changes to 'ñ' before the following letter 'y': thus, 'sañ-yak sam-bud-dha-ya.' Raoul Birnbaum gives the following translation in his book, *The Healing Buddha* (Boston: Shambhala, 1989):

I honor the Lord Master of Healing, the King of Lapis
Lazuli Radiance, Tathāgata, Arhat, Perfectly Enlight-
ened One, saying: To the healing, to the healing, to
the supreme healing hail!

(p. 171 note 11)

Sesshin Evening Ritual (p. 54): This verse is recited at the end of each day's sitting during sesshin. It is to be reserved for this occasion and not incorporated into any other ceremony.

A note on the translations: Unless otherwise credited, the English translations in this book have evolved over many years of actual use at the Rochester Zen Center. Typically, many existing translations have been consulted along the way. In crafting the final versions, consideration has been given both to suitability for chanting and to literal meaning.

