The Zen Teaching of
BODHIDHARMA

Translated and with an
Introduction by Red Pine
Bilingual Edition

A fifth-century Indian Buddhist monk, Bodhidharma is credited with bringing Zen to China. Although the tradition that traces its ancestry back to him did not flourish until nearly two hundred years after his death, today millions of Zen Buddhists and students of kung fu claim him as their spiritual father.

While others viewed Zen practice as a purification of the mind or a stage on the way to perfect enlightenment, Bodhidharma equated Zen with buddhahood and believed that it had a place in everyday life. Instead of telling his disciples to purify their minds, he pointed them to rock walls, to the movements of tigers and cranes, to a hollow reed floating across the Yangtze.

This bilingual edition, the only volume of the great teacher's work currently available in English, presents four of his teachings in their entirety. "Outline of Practice" describes the four all-inclusive habits that lead to enlightenment, the "Bloodstream Sermon" exhorts students to seek the Buddha by seeing their own nature, the "Wake-up Sermon" holds up detachment as the essence of the Way, and the "Breakthrough Sermon" defends his premise that the most essential method for reaching enlightenment is beholding the mind. The original Chinese text, presented on facing pages, is taken from a Ch'ing dynasty woodblock edition.

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ISBN: 0-86547-398-6
Bodhidharma, 6th cent.
The Zen teaching of Bodhidharma
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Originally published by Empty Bowl, Port Townsend, Washington.
Map courtesy of Ts'ai Hsun-hsiung; lettering by Paul Hansen.
Cover illustration and frontispiece are rubbings of Bodhidharma from the Peilin Collection of the Shensi Provincial Museum in Sian, China.
Printed in the United States of America

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA
Bodhidharma, 6th cent.
The Zen teaching of Bodhidharma / translated by Red Pine.
p. cm.
Translation of his selected sermons in Chinese.
1. Zen Buddhism—Doctrines—Early works to 1800. I. Title.
BQ9299.B623E5 1989
294.3'44—dc20
89-9229

North Point Press
850 Talbot Avenue
Berkeley, California
94706
for John Blofeld
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INTRODUCTION

Buddhism came to China 2,000 years ago. As early as A.D. 65, a community of Buddhist monks was reported living under royal patronage in the northern part of Kiangsu Province, not far from the birthplace of Confucius, and the first monks had probably arrived a hundred years earlier. Since then, tens of thousands of Indian and Central Asian monks have journeyed to China by land and sea, but among those who brought the teachings of the Buddha to China, none has had an impact comparable to that of Bodhidharma.

Unknown to all but a few disciples during his lifetime, Bodhidharma is the patriarch of millions of Zen Buddhists and students of kung-fu. He is the subject of many legends as well. Along with zen and kung-fu, Bodhidharma reportedly also brought tea to China. To keep from falling asleep while meditating, he cut off his eyelids, and where they fell, tea bushes grew. Since then, tea has become the beverage of not only monks but everyone in the Orient. Faithful to this tradition, artists invariably depict Bodhidharma with bulging, lidless eyes.

As often happens with legends, it's become impossible to separate fact from fiction. His dates are uncertain; in fact, I know at least one Buddhist scholar who doubts that Bodhidharma ever existed. But at the risk of writing about a man who never lived, I've sketched a likely biography, based on the earliest records and a few of my own surmises, to provide a backdrop for the sermons attributed to him.

Bodhidharma was born around the year 440 in Kanchi, the capital of the Southern Indian kingdom of Pallava. He was a Brahman by birth and the third son of King Simhavarman. When he was
young, he was converted to Buddhism, and later he received instruction in the Dharma from Prajnatara, whom his father had invited from the ancient Buddhist heartland of Magadha. It was Prajnatara who also told Bodhidharma to go to China. Since the traditional overland route was blocked by the Huns, and since Pallava had commercial ties throughout Southeast Asia, Bodhidharma left by ship from the nearby port of Mahaballipuram. After skirting the Indian coast and the Malay Peninsula for three years, he finally arrived in Southern China around 475.

At that time the country was divided into the Northern Wei and Liu Sung dynasties. This division of China into a series of northern and southern dynasties had begun in the early third century and continued until the country was reunited under the Sui dynasty in the late sixth century. It was during this period of division and strife that Indian Buddhism developed into Chinese Buddhism, with the more military-minded northerners emphasizing meditation and magic and the more intellectual southerners preferring philosophical discussion and the intuitive grasp of principles.

When Bodhidharma arrived in China, in the latter part of the fifth century, there were approximately 2,000 Buddhist temples and 36,000 clergy in the South. In the North, a census in 477 counted 6,500 temples and nearly 80,000 clergy. Less than fifty years later, another census conducted in the North raised these figures to 30,000 temples and 2,000,000 clergy, or about 5 percent of the population. This undoubtedly included many people who were trying to avoid taxes and conscription or who sought the protection of the Church for other, nonreligious, reasons, but clearly Buddhism was spreading among the common people north of the Yangtze. In the South, it remained largely confined to the educated elite until well into the sixth century.
Following his arrival in the port of Nanhai, Bodhidharma probably visited Buddhist centers in the South and began learning Chinese, if he hadn’t done so already on his way from India. According to Tao-yuan’s *Transmission of the Lamp*, finished in 1002, Bodhidharma arrived in the South as late as 520 and was invited to the capital in Chienkang for an audience with Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty, successor to the Liu Sung. During this meeting the emperor asked about the merit of performing religious works, and Bodhidharma responded with the doctrine of emptiness. The emperor didn’t understand, and Bodhidharma left. The earliest records, however, mention no such meeting.

In any case, Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtze—according to legend, on a hollow reed—and settled in the North. At first he stayed near the Northern Wei capital of Pingcheng. In 494, when Emperor Hsiao-wen moved his capital south to Loyang on the northern bank of the Lo River, most of the monks living in the Pingcheng area moved too, and Bodhidharma was probably among them. According to Tao-hsuan’s *Further Lives of Exemplary Monks*, the first draft of which was written in 645, Bodhidharma ordained a monk by the name of Sheng-fu. When the capital was moved to Loyang, Sheng-fu moved to the South. Since ordination normally requires a three-year apprenticeship, Bodhidharma must have already been in the North by 490 and must have been reasonably conversant in Chinese by then.

A few years later, in 496, the emperor ordered the construction of Shaolin Temple on Mount Sung, in Honan Province southeast of Loyang. The temple, which still exists (although largely as a tourist attraction), was built for another meditation master from India, not for Bodhidharma. But while zen masters have come and gone at the temple for the past 1,500 years, Bodhidharma is the only monk any-
one but a Buddhist historian associates with Shaolin. It was here, on Mount Sung’s western Shaoshih Peak, that Bodhidharma is said to have spent nine years in meditation, facing the rock wall of a cave about a mile from the temple. Shaolin later became famous for training monks in kung-fu, and Bodhidharma is honored as the founder of this art as well. Coming from India, he undoubtedly instructed his disciples in some form of yoga, but no early records mention him teaching any exercise or martial art.

By the year 500, Loyang was one of the largest cities in the world, with a population of over half a million. When Emperor Hsuan-wu died in 516 and the Empress Dowager Ling assumed control of the government, one of her first acts was to order the construction of Yung-ning Temple. The construction of this temple and its 400-foot-high pagoda nearly exhausted the imperial treasury. According to a record of Loyang’s temples written in 547 by Yang Hsuan-chih, the golden wind-chimes that hung along the temple’s eaves could be heard for three miles and the spire of the temple’s pagoda could be seen over thirty miles away. Yang’s account includes the comments of a monk from the West named Bodhidharma, who called it the most imposing structure he had ever seen. Since the temple wasn’t built until 516 and was destroyed by fire in 534, Bodhidharma must have been in the capital around 520. Early records say he traveled throughout the Loyang area, coming and going with the seasons. In the capital, though, he must have stayed at Yung-ming Temple. Not to be confused with Yung-ning Temple, Yung-ming had been built a few years earlier, at the beginning of the sixth century, by Emperor Hsuan-wu as a headquarters for foreign monks. Before the mass evacuation of the city during the collapse of the Northern Wei in 534, the temple reportedly housed over 3,000 monks from countries as far away as Syria.
Despite the sudden popularity of Buddhism in China, Bodhidharma found few disciples. Besides Sheng-fu, who moved to the South soon after his ordination, the only other disciples mentioned are Tao-yu and Hui-k'o, both of whom are said to have studied with Bodhidharma for five to six years. Tao-yu, we're told, understood the Way but never taught. It was to Hui-k'o that Bodhidharma entrusted the robe and bowl of his lineage and, according to Tao-hsuan, a copy of Gunabhadra’s translation of the Lankavatara Sutra. In the sermons translated here, though, Bodhidharma quotes mostly from the Nirvana, Avatamsaka, and Vimilakirti sutras and uses none of the terminology characteristic of the Lankavatara. Perhaps it was Hui-k'o, not Bodhidharma, who thought so highly of this sutra.

In his Transmission of the Lamp, Tao-yuan says that soon after he had transmitted the patriarchship of his lineage to Hui-k'o, Bodhidharma died in 528 on the fifth day of the tenth month, poisoned by a jealous monk. Tao-hsuan’s much earlier biography of Bodhidharma says only that he died on the banks of the Lo River and doesn’t mention the date or cause of death. According to Tao-yuan, Bodhidharma’s remains were interred near Loyang at Tinglin Temple on Bear Ear Mountain. Tao-yuan adds that three years later an official met Bodhidharma walking in the mountains of Central Asia. He was carrying a staff from which hung a single sandal, and he told the official he was going back to India. Reports of this meeting aroused the curiosity of other monks, who finally agreed to open Bodhidharma’s tomb. But inside all they found was a single sandal, and ever since then Bodhidharma has been pictured carrying a staff from which hangs the missing sandal.

With the assassination of Emperor Hsiao-wu in 534, the Northern Wei split into the Western and Eastern Wei dynasties, and Loyang came under attack. Since the powerful Kao family of the Eastern Wei
was renowned for its patronage of Buddhism, many of the monks living in Loyang, including Hui-k’o, moved to the Eastern Wei capital of Yeh. There Hui-k’o eventually met T’an-lin. T’an-lin worked first in Loyang and later in Yeh writing prefaces and commentaries to new translations of Buddhist sutras. After meeting Hui-k’o, he became interested in Bodhidharma’s approach to Buddhism and added a brief preface to the Outline of Practice. In this preface he says that Bodhidharma came from Southern India and that following his arrival in China, he found only two worthy disciples, Hui-k’o and Tao-yu. He also says that Bodhidharma taught wall meditation and the four practices described in the Outline.

If this is all we know about Bodhidharma, why, then, is he the most famous of all the millions of monks who have studied and taught the Dharma in China? The reason is that he alone is credited with bringing zen to China. Of course, zen, as meditation, had been taught and practiced for several hundred years before Bodhidharma arrived. And much of what he had to say concerning doctrine had been said before—by Tao-sheng, for example, a hundred years earlier. But Bodhidharma’s approach to zen was unique. As he says in these sermons, “Seeing your nature is zen. . . . Not thinking about anything is zen. . . . Everything you do is zen.” While others viewed zen as purification of the mind or as a stage on the way to buddhahood, Bodhidharma equated zen with buddhahood—and buddhahood with the mind, the everyday mind. Instead of telling his disciples to purify their minds, he pointed them to rock walls, to the movements of tigers and cranes, to a hollow reed floating across the Yangtze, to a single sandal. Bodhidharma’s zen was Mahayana Zen, not Hinayana Zen—the sword of wisdom, not the meditation cushion. As did other masters, he undoubtedly instructed his disciples in Buddhist discipline, meditation, and doctrine, but he used the sword
that Prajnatara had given him to cut their minds free from rules, trances, and scriptures. Such a sword, though, is hard to grasp and hard to use. Small wonder that his sole successor, Hui-k’o, was a one-armed man.

But such a radical understanding of zen didn’t originate with Bodhidharma or with Prajnatara. It’s said that one day Brahma, lord of creation, offered the Buddha a flower and asked him to preach the Dharma. When the Buddha held up the flower, his audience was puzzled, except for Kasyapa, who smiled. This is how zen began. And this is how it was transmitted: with a flower, with a rock wall, with a shout. This approach, once it was made known by Bodhidharma and his successors, revolutionized the understanding and practice of Buddhism in China.

Such an approach doesn’t come across very well in books. But in his *Further Lives of Exemplary Monks*, Tao-hsuan says that Bodhidharma’s teachings were written down. Most scholars agree that the *Outline of Practice* is one such record, but opinion is divided concerning the other three sermons translated here. All three have long been attributed to Bodhidharma, but in recent years a number of scholars have suggested that these sermons are the work of later disciples. Yanagida, for example, attributes the *Bloodstream Sermon* to a member of the Oxhead Zen School, which flourished in the seventh and eighth centuries, and he thinks that the *Wake-up Sermon* was an eighth-century work of the Northern Zen School and the *Breakthrough Sermon* was by Shen-hsiu, the seventh-century patriarch of the Northern Zen School.

Unfortunately, evidence that would conclusively prove or disprove the traditional attribution is lacking. Until the present century, the earliest known copies of these sermons were fourteenth-century versions of T’ang dynasty (618–907) originals in the collection of
Japan's Kanazawa Bunko. But with the discovery of thousands of T'ang dynasty Buddhist manuscripts earlier this century in China's Tunhuang Caves, we now have seventh- and eighth-century copies. Clearly these sermons were compiled at a very early date by monks who traced their ancestry to Bodhidharma. If it wasn't Hui-k'o or one of his disciples, perhaps it was T'an-lin who wrote them down. In any case, in the absence of convincing evidence to the contrary, I see no reason why they shouldn't be accepted as the sermons of the man to whom they've been attributed for more than 1,200 years.

Bodhidharma's disciples were few, and the Zen tradition that traced its ancestry to him didn't begin its full flowering until nearly two hundred years after his death. Given the spontaneity and detachment fostered by Bodhidharma's approach to zen, it's easy to see why these sermons were eventually neglected in favor of those by native Chinese zen masters. By comparison Bodhidharma's sermons seem somewhat alien and bare. I only found them myself by accident, in an edition of Huang-po's *Essentials on the Transmission of Mind*. That was twelve years ago. Since then I've grown quite fond of their bare-bones zen, and I've often wondered why they aren't more popular. But popular or not, here they are again. Before they fade once more into the dust of some crypt or library, read them through once or twice and look for the one thing that Bodhidharma brought to China: look for the print of the mind.

Red Pine
Bamboo Lake, Taiwan
Big Cold, Year of the Tiger
the Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma
菩提達磨大師略辨大乘入道四行觀

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Outline of Practice

Many roads lead to the Path, but basically there are only two: reason and practice. To enter by reason means to realize the essence through instruction and to believe that all living things share the same true nature, which isn’t apparent because it’s shrouded by sensation and delusion. Those who turn from delusion back to reality, who meditate on walls, the absence of self and other, the oneness of mortal and sage, and who remain unmoved even by scriptures are in complete and unspoken agreement with reason. Without moving, without effort, they enter, we say, by reason.

To enter by practice refers to four all-inclusive practices: suffering injustice, adapting to conditions, seeking nothing, and practicing the Dharma.

First, suffering injustice. When those who search for the Path encounter adversity, they should think to themselves, “In countless ages gone by, I’ve turned from the essential to the trivial and wandered through all manner of existence, often angry without cause and guilty of numberless transgressions. Now, though I do no wrong, I’m punished by my past. Neither gods nor men can
世上有许多事情，不如意的时候，你不能改变，但你可以换个角度想，这样你的心情自然会好起来。
foresee when an evil deed will bear its fruit. I accept it with an open heart and without complaint of injustice.” The sutras say, “When you meet with adversity don’t be upset, because it makes sense.” With such understanding you’re in harmony with reason. And by suffering injustice you enter the Path.

Second, adapting to conditions. As mortals, we’re ruled by conditions, not by ourselves. All the suffering and joy we experience depend on conditions. If we should be blessed by some great reward, such as fame or fortune, it’s the fruit of a seed planted by us in the past. When conditions change, it ends. Why delight in its existence? But while success and failure depend on conditions, the mind neither waxes nor wanes. Those who remain unmoved by the wind of joy silently follow the Path.

Third, seeking nothing. People of this world are deluded. They’re always longing for something—always, in a word, seeking. But the wise wake up. They choose reason over custom. They fix their minds on the sublime and let their bodies change with the seasons. All phenomena are empty. They contain nothing worth desiring. Calamity forever alternates with Prosperity. * To dwell in the three realms is to dwell in a burning house. To have a body is to suffer. Does anyone with a body know peace? Those who understand this detach themselves from all that exists and stop imagining or seeking anything. The sutras say, “To seek is to suffer.
達磨大師四行觀終

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四稱法行者性淨之理目之爲法此理衆相斯空無染
To seek nothing is bliss." When you seek nothing, you're on the Path.

Fourth, practicing the Dharma. The Dharma is the truth that all natures are pure. By this truth, all appearances are empty. Defilement and attachment, subject and object don't exist. The sutras say, "The Dharma includes no being because it's free from the impurity of being, and the Dharma includes no self because it's free from the impurity of self." Those wise enough to believe and understand this truth are bound to practice according to the Dharma. And since that which is real includes nothing worth begrudging, they give their body, life, and property in charity, without regret, without the vanity of giver, gift, or recipient, and without bias or attachment. And to eliminate impurity they teach others, but without becoming attached to form. Thus, through their own practice they're able to help others and glorify the Way of Enlightenment. And as with charity, they also practice the other virtues. But while practicing the six virtues to eliminate delusion, they practice nothing at all. This is what's meant by practicing the Dharma.
達磨大師血脈論

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自心是涅槃若言心外有佛及菩提可得無有是處佛

及菩提皆在何處譬如有人以手捉虚空得否虛空但
Bloodstream Sermon

Everything that appears in the three realms comes from the mind. Hence buddhas of the past and future teach mind to mind without bothering about definitions.

But if they don't define it, what do they mean by mind?

You ask. That's your mind. I answer. That's my mind. If I had no mind, how could I answer? If you had no mind, how could you ask? That which asks is your mind. Through endless kalpas without beginning, whatever you do, wherever you are, that's your real mind, that's your real buddha. This mind is the buddha says the same thing. Beyond this mind you'll never find another buddha.

To search for enlightenment or nirvana beyond this mind is impossible. The reality of your own self-nature, the absence of cause and effect, is what's meant by mind. Your mind is nirvana. You might think you can find a buddha or enlightenment somewhere beyond the mind, but such a place doesn't exist.

Trying to find a buddha or enlightenment is like trying to grab space. Space has a name but no form. It's not something you
can pick up or put down. And you certainly can’t grab it. Beyond this mind you’ll never see a buddha. The buddha is a product of your mind. Why look for a buddha beyond this mind?

Buddhas of the past and future only talk about this mind. The mind is the buddha, and the buddha is the mind. Beyond the mind there’s no buddha, and beyond the buddha there’s no mind. If you think there’s a buddha beyond the mind, where is he? There’s no buddha beyond the mind, so why envision one? You can’t know your real mind as long as you deceive yourself. As long as you’re enthralled by a lifeless form, you’re not free. If you don’t believe me, deceiving yourself won’t help. It’s not the buddha’s fault. People, though, are deluded. They’re unaware that their own mind is the buddha. Otherwise they wouldn’t look for a buddha outside the mind.

Buddhas don’t save buddhas. If you use your mind to look for a buddha, you won’t see the buddha. As long as you look for a buddha somewhere else, you’ll never see that your own mind is the buddha. Don’t use a buddha to worship a buddha. And don’t use the mind to invoke a buddha.16 Buddhas don’t recite sutras.17 Buddhas don’t keep precepts.18 And buddhas don’t break precepts. Buddhas don’t keep or break anything. Buddhas don’t do good or evil.

To find a buddha, you have to see your nature.19 Whoever sees his nature is a buddha. If you don’t see your nature, invoking buddhas, reciting sutras, making offerings, and keeping precepts are all useless. Invoking buddhas results in good karma, reciting sutras results in a good memory; keeping precepts results in a
good rebirth, and making offerings results in future blessings—but no buddha.

If you don’t understand by yourself, you’ll have to find a teacher to get to the bottom of life and death. But unless he sees his nature, such a person isn’t a teacher. Even if he can recite the Twelvefold Canon, he can’t escape the Wheel of Birth and Death. He suffers in the three realms without hope of release.

Long ago, the monk Good Star was able to recite the entire Canon. But he didn’t escape the Wheel, because he didn’t see his nature. If this was the case with Good Star, then people nowadays who recite a few sutras or shastras and think it’s the Dharma are fools. Unless you see your mind, reciting so much prose is useless.

To find a buddha all you have to do is see your nature. Your nature is the buddha. And the buddha is the person who’s free: free of plans, free of cares. If you don’t see your nature and run around all day looking somewhere else, you’ll never find a buddha. The truth is, there’s nothing to find. But to reach such an understanding you need a teacher and you need to struggle to make yourself understand. Life and death are important. Don’t suffer them in vain. There’s no advantage in deceiving yourself. Even if you have mountains of jewels and as many servants as there are grains of sand along the Ganges, you see them when your eyes are open. But
生死若見性即是佛不見性即是眾生若離眾生性別生死若見性即是佛不見性即是眾生若離眾生性別
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what about when your eyes are shut? You should realize then that everything you see is like a dream or illusion.

If you don’t find a teacher soon, you’ll live this life in vain. It’s true, you have the buddha-nature. But without the help of a teacher you’ll never know it. Only one person in a million becomes enlightened without a teacher’s help.

If, though, by the conjunction of conditions, someone understands what the Buddha meant, that person doesn’t need a teacher. Such a person has a natural awareness superior to anything taught. But unless you’re so blessed, study hard, and by means of instruction you’ll understand.

People who don’t understand and think they can do so without study are no different from those deluded souls who can’t tell white from black. Falsely proclaiming the Buddhadharma, such persons in fact blaspheme the Buddha and subvert the Dharma. They preach as if they were bringing rain. But theirs is the preaching of devils, not of buddhas. Their teacher is the King of Devils and their disciples are the Devil’s minions. Deluded people who follow such instruction unwittingly sink deeper in the Sea of Birth and Death.

Unless they see their nature, how can people call themselves buddhas? They’re liars who deceive others into entering the realm of devils. Unless they see their nature, their preaching of the Twelvefold Canon is nothing but the preaching of devils. Their allegiance is to Mara, not to the Buddha. Unable to distinguish white from black, how can they escape birth and death?

Whoever sees his nature is a buddha; whoever doesn’t is a mortal. But if you can find your buddha-nature apart from your
无佛性可得者，佛今在何处即众生死，即佛性也性

外无佛佛即是有生性，除此性外无佛可得，佛外无性可得。

问曰，若不性念佛诵经布施持戒精进广兴福利得成佛否？答曰，不得又问，因何不得答曰，有少法可得是为法是因果是受报是轮迴法不免生死何时得成佛道，成佛须是见性，若不性因果等语是外道法若不是谤佛愚何得成，但有住著一心，一能一解一见佛，都不许佛不持犯心性本空即非垢净诸法无修无证，无因无果佛不持戒佛不修善佛不造恶佛不精进佛，不懈怠佛是无作人，但有住著心见佛即不许也佛不。
mortal nature, where is it? Our mortal nature is our buddha-nature. Beyond this nature there’s no buddha. The buddha is our nature. There’s no buddha besides this nature. And there’s no nature besides the buddha.

But suppose I don’t see my nature, can’t I still attain enlightenment by invoking buddhas, reciting sutras, making offerings, observing precepts, practicing devotions, or doing good works?

No, you can’t.

Why not?

If you attain anything at all, it’s conditional, it’s karmic. It results in retribution. It turns the Wheel. And as long as you’re subject to birth and death, you’ll never attain enlightenment. To attain enlightenment you have to see your nature. Unless you see your nature, all this talk about cause and effect is nonsense. Buddhas don’t practice nonsense. A buddha is free of karma, free of cause and effect. To say he attains anything at all is to slander a buddha. What could he possibly attain? Even focusing on a mind, a power, an understanding, or a view is impossible for a buddha. A buddha isn’t one-sided. The nature of his mind is basically empty, neither pure nor impure. He’s free of practice and realization. He’s free of cause and effect.

A buddha doesn’t observe precepts. A buddha doesn’t do good or evil. A buddha isn’t energetic or lazy. A buddha is someone who does nothing, someone who can’t even focus his mind on a buddha. A buddha isn’t a buddha. Don’t think about buddhas. If
you don’t see what I’m talking about, you’ll never know your own mind.

People who don’t see their nature and imagine they can practice thoughtlessness all the time are liars and fools. They fall into endless space. They’re like drunks. They can’t tell good from evil. If you intend to cultivate such a practice, you have to see your nature before you can put an end to rational thought. To attain enlightenment without seeing your nature is impossible.

Still others commit all sorts of evil deeds, claiming karma doesn’t exist. They erroneously maintain that since everything is empty, committing evil isn’t wrong. Such persons fall into a hell of endless darkness with no hope of release. Those who are wise hold no such conception.

But if our every movement or state, whenever it occurs, is the mind, why don’t we see this mind when a person’s body dies?
The mind is always present. You just don’t see it.
But if the mind is present, why don’t I see it?
Do you ever dream?
Of course.
When you dream, is that you?
Yes, it’s me.
即是身是汝本法身即此法身是汝本心此心從無始
曠大劫來與如今不別未曾有生死不生不滅不增不減不垢不淨不好不惡不來不去亦無是非亦無男女
相亦無僧俗老少無聖無凡亦無佛亦無眾生亦無修
證亦無因果亦無筋力亦無相貌猶如虛空取不得捨
不得山河石壁不能為礙出沒往來自在神通透五蘊
山渡生死河一切業拘此法身不得此心微妙難見此
心不同色心此心是人皆欲得見於此光明中運手動
足者如恒河沙及乎問者總道不得猶如木人相似總
是自己受用因何不識佛言一切眾生盡是迷人因此
And is what you’re doing and saying different from you?
No, it isn’t.

But if it isn’t, then this body is your real body. And this real body is your mind. And this mind, through endless kalpas without beginning, has never varied. It has never lived or died, appeared or disappeared, increased or decreased. It’s not pure or impure, good or evil, past or future. It’s not true or false. It’s not male or female. It doesn’t appear as a monk or a layman, an elder or a novice, a sage or a fool, a buddha or a mortal. It strives for no realization and suffers no karma. It has no strength or form. It’s like space. You can’t possess it and you can’t lose it. Its movements can’t be blocked by mountains, rivers, or rock walls. Its unstoppable powers penetrate the Mountain of Five Skandhas and cross the River of Samsara. No karma can restrain this real body. But this mind is subtle and hard to see. It’s not the same as the sensual mind. Everyone wants to see this mind, and those who move their hands and feet by its light are as many as the grains of sand along the Ganges, but when you ask them, they can’t explain it. They’re like puppets. It’s theirs to use. Why don’t they see it?

The Buddha said people are deluded. This is why when they
作业堕生死河，欲出还没只为不觉性众生若不迷因
何问著其中事无有一人得会者自家运手足因何
不识故知圣人语不错迷人自不会闻故知此难明惟
佛一人能会此法，余人天及众生等尽不明若智慧
明了此心号名法性亦名解脱生死不拘一切法拘它
不得圣名大自在王如来亦名不思议亦名圣体亦名
长生不死亦名大仙名虽不同体即是圣人种若分
别皆不离自心心量广大应用无空应眼见色应耳闻
声应鼻嗅香应舌知味乃至施为运动皆是自心一切
时中但有语言道断即是自心故云如来色无尽智慧
亦复然色无尽是自心识善能分别一切乃至施为
act they fall into the River of Endless Rebirth. And when they try to get out, they only sink deeper. And all because they don’t see their nature. If people weren’t deluded, why would they ask about something right in front of them? Not one of them understands the movement of his own hands and feet. The Buddha wasn’t mistaken. Deluded people don’t know who they are. Something so hard to fathom is known by a buddha and no one else. Only the wise know this mind, this mind called dharma-nature, this mind called liberation. Neither life nor death can restrain this mind. Nothing can. It’s also called the Unstoppable Tathagata, the Incomprehensible, the Sacred Self, the Immortal, the Great Sage. Its names vary but not its essence. Buddhas vary too, but none leaves his own mind.

The mind’s capacity is limitless, and its manifestations are inexhaustible. Seeing forms with your eyes, hearing sounds with your ears, smelling odors with your nose, tasting flavors with your tongue, every movement or state is all your mind. At every moment, where language can’t go, that’s your mind.

The sutras say, “A tathagata’s forms are endless. And so is his awareness.” The endless variety of forms is due to the mind. Its ability to distinguish things, whatever their movement or state, is
the mind’s awareness. But the mind has no form and its awareness no limit. Hence it’s said, “A tathagata’s forms are endless. And so is his awareness.”

A material body of the four elements\textsuperscript{31} is trouble. A material body is subject to birth and death. But the real body exists without existing, because a tathagata’s real body never changes. The sutras say, “People should realize that the buddha-nature is something they have always had.” Kashyapa\textsuperscript{32} only realized his own nature.

Our nature is the mind. And the mind is our nature. This nature is the same as the mind of all buddhas. Buddhas of the past and future only transmit this mind. Beyond this mind there’s no buddha anywhere. But deluded people don’t realize that their own mind is the buddha. They keep searching outside. They never stop invoking buddhas or worshipping buddhas and wondering \textit{Where is the buddha?} Don’t indulge in such illusions. Just know your mind. Beyond your mind there’s no other buddha. The sutras say, “Everything that has form is an illusion.” They also say, “Wherever you are, there’s a buddha.” Your mind is the buddha. Don’t use a buddha to worship a buddha.

Even if a buddha or bodhisattva\textsuperscript{33} should suddenly appear before you, there’s no need for reverence. This mind of ours is empty and contains no such form. Those who hold onto appearances are devils. They fall from the Path. Why worship illusions born of the mind? Those who worship don’t know, and those who
佛如來本性體上都無如是相見勿須在意各異境
界切勿用抹括亦莫生怖不要疑惑我心本來清淨
何處有如許相見乃至天龍夜叉鬼神帝釋梵王等相
亦不用心生敬重亦莫怕懼我心本來空寂一切相見
皆是妄想但莫取相若起佛見若見及佛菩薩等相見
而生敬重自墮眾生位中若欲直會但莫取一切相即
更無別語故經云凡所有相皆是虛妄都無定實幻
無定相是無常法但不取相合它聖意故經云離一切
相即名諸佛。問曰因何不得禮佛菩薩等答曰天魔波旬阿修羅示
know don’t worship. By worshipping you come under the spell of devils. I point this out because I’m afraid you’re unaware of it. The basic nature of a buddha has no such form. Keep this in mind, even if something unusual should appear. Don’t embrace it, and don’t fear it, and don’t doubt that your mind is basically pure. Where could there be room for any such form? Also, at the appearance of spirits, demons, or divine beings, conceive neither respect nor fear. Your mind is basically empty. All appearances are illusions. Don’t hold on to appearances.

If you envision a buddha, a dharma, or a bodhisattva and conceive respect for them, you relegate yourself to the realm of mortals. If you seek direct understanding, don’t hold on to any appearance whatsoever, and you’ll succeed. I have no other advice. The sutras say, “All appearances are illusions.” They have no fixed existence, no constant form. They’re impermanent. Don’t cling to appearances, and you’ll be of one mind with the Buddha. The sutras say, “That which is free of all form is the buddha.”

But why shouldn’t we worship buddhas and bodhisattvas?

Devils and demons possess the power of manifestation. They
佛是自心，莫著礼拜，佛是西土，云觉性。覺即是心，即是佛，即是道。道即是禪，即是性。凡聖所測，皆云見本性，為禪若不見本性，即非禪也。使說千經萬論，若不見本性，只是凡夫，非是佛法。道幽深不可諱，會典教，憑所及，但見本性，一字不識，亦得見性。即是佛聖體，本來清淨，無有雜穢，所有言說皆是聖人從心起。用體本來空名，猶不及，十二部經。憑何得及道本圓成。不用修證，道非聲色，微妙難見。如人飲水冷暖自知。不可向人說，唯有如來能知。餘
can create the appearance of bodhisattvas in all sorts of guises. But they’re false. None of them are buddhas. The buddha is your own mind. Don’t misdirect your worship.

*Buddha* is Sanskrit for what you call *aware, miraculously aware*. Responding, perceiving, arching your brows, blinking your eyes, moving your hands and feet, it’s all your miraculously aware nature. And this nature is the mind. And the mind is the buddha. And the buddha is the path. And the path is zen.36 But the word *zen* is one that remains a puzzle to both mortals and sages. Seeing your nature is zen. Unless you see your nature, it’s not zen.

Even if you can explain thousands of sutras and shastras,37 unless you see your own nature yours is the teaching of a mortal, not a buddha. The true Way is sublime. It can’t be expressed in language. Of what use are scriptures? But someone who sees his own nature finds the Way, even if he can’t read a word. Someone who sees his nature is a buddha. And since a buddha’s body is intrinsically pure and unsullied, and everything he says is an expression of his mind, being basically empty, a buddha can’t be found in words or anywhere in the Twelvefold Canon.

The Way is basically perfect. It doesn’t require perfecting. The Way has no form or sound. It’s subtle and hard to perceive. It’s like when you drink water: you know how hot or cold it is, but you can’t tell others. Of that which only a tathagata knows men and gods remain unaware. The awareness of mortals falls short. As long
由于该页面内容是古代汉字，无法将其直接翻译成现代中文。
as they’re attached to appearances, they’re unaware that their minds are empty. And by mistakenly clinging to the appearance of things they lose the Way.

If you know that everything comes from the mind, don’t become attached. Once attached, you’re unaware. But once you see your own nature, the entire Canon becomes so much prose. Its thousands of sutras and shastras only amount to a clear mind. Understanding comes in midsentence. What good are doctrines?

The ultimate Truth is beyond words. Doctrines are words. They’re not the Way. The Way is wordless. Words are illusions. They’re no different from things that appear in your dreams at night, be they palaces or carriages, forested parks or lakeside pavilions. Don’t conceive any delight for such things. They’re all cradles of rebirth. Keep this in mind when you approach death. Don’t cling to appearances, and you’ll break through all barriers. A moment’s hesitation and you’ll be under the spell of devils. Your real body is pure and impervious. But because of delusions you’re unaware of it. And because of this you suffer karma in vain. Wherever you find delight, you find bondage. But once you awaken to your original body and mind, you’re no longer bound by attachments.

Anyone who gives up the transcendent for the mundane, in any of its myriad forms, is a mortal. A buddha is someone who finds freedom in good fortune and bad. Such is his power that
拘它不得聖人久有大威德。一切品類業。被它聖人轉。天堂地獄無奈何。凡夫神識昏迷不同。聖人內外明。徵若有疑。即不作。即流浪生死。後悔無相救處。貧窮困苦皆從妄想生。若了是心。遞相勸勉。但無作而作。即來如知見。初發心。人神識總不定。若夢中頻見異境。過於日轉。即餘習。頓盡。界性見。若有此事。即是成道。因唯自知不可向人說。或靜。林中行。住坐。臥。眼見光明。或大或小。莫與人說。亦不得取。亦是自性光明。或夜靜。暗。亦行。住坐臥。眼。睹光明。與。畫。無異。不得怪。並是自心欲。明。顯或夜。夢中見。星月。分明亦自心。諸緣。息。
karma can’t hold him. No matter what kind of karma, a buddha transforms it. Heaven and hell are nothing to him. But the awareness of a mortal is dim compared to that of a buddha, who penetrates everything, inside and out.

If you’re not sure, don’t act. Once you act, you wander through birth and death and regret having no refuge. Poverty and hardship are created by false thinking. To understand this mind you have to act without acting. Only then will you see things from a tathagata’s perspective.

But when you first embark on the Path, your awareness won’t be focused. You’re likely to see all sorts of strange, dreamlike scenes. But you shouldn’t doubt that all such scenes come from your own mind and nowhere else.

If, as in a dream, you see a light brighter than the sun, your remaining attachments will suddenly come to an end and the nature of reality will be revealed. Such an occurrence serves as the basis for enlightenment. But this is something only you know. You can’t explain it to others.

Or if, while you’re walking, standing, sitting, or lying in a quiet grove, you see a light, regardless of whether it’s bright or dim, don’t tell others and don’t focus on it. It’s the light of your own nature.

Or if, while you’re walking, standing, sitting, or lying in the stillness and darkness of night, everything appears as though in daylight, don’t be startled. It’s your own mind about to reveal itself.

Or if, while you’re dreaming at night, you see the moon and stars in all their clarity, it means the workings of your mind are about to end. But don’t tell others. And if your dreams aren’t clear,
亦不得向人说，夢若昏昏如陰暗中行，亦是自心煩。

惱障重，亦自知若見本性，不用讀經念佛，專學多知無益。

識轉昏，設教只為標心，若識心何用看教？若從凡入聖，即須息業養神，隨分過日，若多嗔恚，令性轉與道相違，自賺無益聖人，破邪魔一切眾生，但見本性餘習，一切業拘它不得聖人破邪。

頓滅神識不昧，須是直下便會，只在如今，欲真會道，莫執一切業息業養神，餘習亦盡，自然明白，不用功外道，不會佛意用功，最多違背聖意，終日驅驅念佛，轉經，昏於神性，不免輪迴，佛是閒人，何用驅驅，廣求名利，何用但不見性，念佛長學精進，六時行道，長時何用。
as if you were walking in the dark, it's because your mind is masked by cares. This too is something only you know.

If you see your nature, you don't need to read sutras or invoke buddhas. Erudition and knowledge are not only useless but also cloud your awareness. Doctrines are only for pointing to the mind. Once you see your mind, why pay attention to doctrines?

To go from mortal to buddha, you have to put an end to karma, nurture your awareness, and accept what life brings. If you're always getting angry, you'll turn your nature against the Way. There's no advantage in deceiving yourself. Buddhas move freely through birth and death, appearing and disappearing at will. They can't be restrained by karma or overcome by devils.

Once mortals see their nature, all attachments end. Awareness isn't hidden. But you can only find it right now. It's only now. If you really want to find the Way, don't hold on to anything. Once you put an end to karma and nurture your awareness, any attachments that remain will come to an end. Understanding comes naturally. You don't have to make any effort. But fanatics don't understand what the Buddha meant. And the harder they try, the farther they get from the Sage's meaning. All day long they invoke buddhas and read sutras. But they remain blind to their own divine nature, and they don't escape the Wheel.

A buddha is an idle person. He doesn't run around after fortune and fame. What good are such things in the end? People who don't see their nature and think reading sutras, invoking buddhas, studying long and hard, practicing morning and night, never lying down, or acquiring knowledge is the Dharma,
blaspheme the Dharma. Buddhas of the past and future only talk about seeing your nature. All practices are impermanent. Unless they see their nature, people who claim to have attained unexcelled, complete enlightenment are liars.

Among Shakyamuni's ten greatest disciples, Ananda was foremost in learning. But he didn't know the Buddha. All he did was study and memorize. Arhats don't know the Buddha. All they know are so many practices for realization, and they become trapped by cause and effect. Such is a mortal's karma: no escape from birth and death. By doing the opposite of what he intended, such people blaspheme the Buddha. Killing them would not be wrong. The sutras say, "Since icchantikas are incapable of belief, killing them would be blameless, whereas people who believe reach the state of buddhahood."

Unless you see your nature, you shouldn't go around criticizing the goodness of others. There's no advantage in deceiving yourself. Good and bad are distinct. Cause and effect are clear. Heaven and hell are right before your eyes. But fools don't believe and fall straight into a hell of endless darkness without even knowing it. What keeps them from believing is the heaviness of their karma. They're like blind people who don't believe there's such a thing as light. Even if you explain it to them, they still don't believe, because they're blind. How can they possibly distinguish light?

The same holds true for fools who end up among the lower
生雜類誕在貧窮下賤求生不得求死不得雖受是苦
直問著亦言我今快樂不異天堂故知一切眾生處
發心者不自由它也若見自心是佛不在剃除髡髪
白衣亦是佛若不見性則除髡髪亦是外道
問曰白衣有妻子。性不言姓欲只為不見性但得見性姓欲本來空寂自
悟。爾斷除亦不樂著縱有餘習不能為害何以故性本清
層故雖處在五蘊色身中其性本來清淨染污不得法
身本來無受無顛無渴無寒熱無病無恩愛無眷屬無
苦樂無好惡無短長無強弱本來無有一物可得只緣

orders of existence\textsuperscript{46} or among the poor and despised. They can’t live and they can’t die. And despite their sufferings, if you ask them, they say they’re as happy as gods. All mortals, even those who think themselves wellborn, are likewise unaware. Because of the heaviness of their karma, such fools can’t believe and can’t get free.

People who see that their mind is the buddha don’t need to shave their head.\textsuperscript{47} Laymen are buddhas too. Unless they see their nature, people who shave their head are simply fanatics.

\emph{But since married laymen don’t give up sex, how can they become buddhas?}

I only talk about seeing your nature. I don’t talk about sex simply because you don’t see your nature. Once you see your nature, sex is basically immaterial. It ends along with your delight in it. Even if some habits remain, they can’t harm you, because your nature is essentially pure. Despite dwelling in a material body of four elements, your nature is basically pure. It can’t be corrupted. Your real body is basically pure. It can’t be corrupted. Your real body has no sensation, no hunger or thirst, no warmth or cold, no sickness, no love or attachment, no pleasure or pain, no good or bad, no shortness or length, no weakness or strength. Actually, there’s nothing here. It’s only because you cling to this material
執此色身因即有飢渴寒熱痛病等相若不執即一
任作若於生死中得自在轉一切法與聖人神通自在
無礙無處不安若心有疑決定透一切境界不過不作
最好作了不免輪迴生死若見性旃陀羅亦得成佛
問曰旃陀羅殺生作業如何得成佛答曰只言見性不
言作業縱作業不同一切業拘不得從無始曠大劫來
只為不見性墮地獄中所以作業輪迴生死從悟得本
性終不作業若不見性念佛免報不得非論殺生命若
見性疑心頓除殺生命亦不奈它何自西天二十七祖
只是遞傳心印吾今來此土唯傳頓教大乘即心是佛
不言持戒精進苦行乃至入水火登於劍輪一食長坐
body that things like hunger and thirst, warmth and cold, and sickness appear.

Once you stop clinging and let things be, you’ll be free, even of birth and death. You’ll transform everything. You’ll possess spiritual powers that can’t be obstructed. And you’ll be at peace wherever you are. If you doubt this, you’ll never see through anything. You’re better off doing nothing. Once you act, you can’t avoid the cycle of birth and death. But once you see your nature, you’re a buddha even if you work as a butcher.

*But butchers create karma by slaughtering animals. How can they be buddhas?*

I only talk about seeing your nature. I don’t talk about creating karma. Regardless of what we do, our karma has no hold on us. Through endless kalpas without beginning, it’s only because people don’t see their nature that they end up in hell. As long as a person creates karma, he keeps passing through birth and death. But once a person realizes his original nature, he stops creating karma. If he doesn’t see his nature, invoking buddhas won’t release him from his karma, regardless of whether or not he’s a butcher. But once he sees his nature, all doubts vanish. Even a butcher’s karma has no effect on such a person.

In India, the twenty-seven patriarchs only transmitted the imprint of the mind. And the only reason I’ve come to China is to transmit the instantaneous teaching of the Mahayana: *This mind is the buddha.* I don’t talk about precepts, devotions or ascetic practices such as immersing yourself in water and fire, treading a wheel of knives, eating one meal a day, or never lying down. These
不臥盡是外道有為法若識得施為運動靈覺之性汝
即諸佛心前佛後佛只言傳心更無別法若識此法凡
夫一字不識亦是佛若不識自己靈覺之性假使身破
如微塵見佛終不得也佛者亦名法身亦名本心此心
無形相無因果無筋骨猶如虛空取不得不同質礙不
同外道此心除如來一人能會其餘衆生迷入不明了
此心不離四大色身中若離是心卽無能運動是身無
知如草木瓦礫身是無性因何運動若自心動乃至語
言施為運動見聞覺知皆是動心動用動是心動動即
其用動用外無心外無動動不是心心不是動動本
無心心本無動動不離心心不離動動無心離心無動
are fanatical, provisional teachings. Once you recognize your moving, miraculously aware nature, yours is the mind of all buddhas. Buddhas of the past and future only talk about transmitting the mind. They teach nothing else. If someone understands this teaching, even if he’s illiterate he’s a buddha. If you don’t see your own miraculously aware nature, you’ll never find a buddha even if you break your body into atoms.\(^5\)

The buddha is your real body, your original mind. This mind has no form or characteristics, no cause or effect, no tendons or bones. It’s like space. You can’t hold it. It’s not the mind of materialists or nihilists. Except for a tathagata, no one else—no mortal, no deluded being—can fathom it.

But this mind isn’t somewhere outside the material body of four elements. Without this mind we can’t move. The body has no awareness. Like a plant or stone, the body has no nature. So how does it move? It’s the mind that moves.

Language and behavior, perception and conception are all functions of the moving mind. All motion is the mind’s motion. Motion is its function. Apart from motion there’s no mind, and apart from the mind there’s no motion. But motion isn’t the mind. And the mind isn’t motion. Motion is basically mindless. And the mind is basically motionless. But motion doesn’t exist without the mind. And the mind doesn’t exist without motion. There’s no mind for motion to exist apart from, and no motion for mind to exist apart from. Motion is the mind’s function, and its function is its
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注：表格内容为示例，实际内容根据具体需求填写。
motion. Even so, the mind neither moves nor functions, because the essence of its functioning is emptiness and emptiness is essentially motionless. Motion is the same as the mind. And the mind is essentially motionless.

Hence the sutras tell us to move without moving, to travel without traveling, to see without seeing, to laugh without laughing, to hear without hearing, to know without knowing, to be happy without being happy, to walk without walking, to stand without standing. And the sutras say, "Go beyond language. Go beyond thought." Basically, seeing, hearing, and knowing are completely empty. Your anger, joy, or pain is like that of a puppet. You can search, but you won't find a thing.

According to the sutras, evil deeds result in hardships and good deeds result in blessings. Angry people go to hell and happy people go to heaven. But once you know that the nature of anger and joy is empty and you let them go, you free yourself from karma. If you don't see your nature, quoting sutras is no help. I could go on, but this brief sermon will have to do.
夫道者以寂滅為體，修者以離相為宗。故經云：“寂滅是菩提滅諸相故佛者覺也，人有覺心得菩提道故名為佛。”

經云離一切諸相即名諸佛。是知有相是無相之相，不可以眼見唯可以智知。若聞此法者生一念信心此定慧即名超三界。然貪嗔癡亦無實性。但据眾生而言，若能返照了了見貪嗔癡性即是佛性貪嗔癡外更無別有佛性經云諸佛從本來常處於三毒長養於白法而成於世尊。三毒貪嗔癡也言大乘最上乘者皆
Wake-up Sermon

The essence of the Way is detachment. And the goal of those who practice is freedom from appearances. The sutras say, "Detachment is enlightenment because it negates appearances." Buddhahood means awareness. Mortals whose minds are aware reach the Way of Enlightenment and are therefore called buddhas. The sutras say, "Those who free themselves from all appearances are called buddhas." The appearance of appearance as no appearance can't be seen visually but can only be known by means of wisdom. Whoever hears and believes this teaching embarks on the Great Vehicle and leaves the three realms.

The three realms are greed, anger, and delusion. To leave the three realms means to go from greed, anger, and delusion back to morality, meditation, and wisdom. Greed, anger, and delusion have no nature of their own. They depend on mortals. And anyone capable of reflection is bound to see that the nature of greed, anger, and delusion is the buddha-nature. Beyond greed, anger, and delusion there is no other buddha-nature. The sutras say, "Buddhas have only become buddhas while living with the three poisons and nourishing themselves on the pure Dharma." The three poisons are greed, anger, and delusion.

The Great Vehicle is the greatest of all vehicles. It's the
是菩萨所行之处。所不乘。亦无所乘。经终日乘未尝乘。
conveyance of bodhisattvas, who use everything without using anything and who travel all day without traveling. Such is the vehicle of buddhas. The sutras say, "No vehicle is the vehicle of buddhas."

Whoever realizes that the six senses\(^54\) aren't real, that the five aggregates\(^55\) are fictions, that no such things can be located anywhere in the body, understands the language of buddhas. The sutras say, "The cave of five aggregates is the hall of zen. The opening of the inner eye is the door of the Great Vehicle." What could be clearer?

Not thinking about anything is zen. Once you know this, walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, everything you do is zen. To know that the mind is empty is to see the buddha. The buddhas of the ten directions\(^56\) have no mind. To see no mind is to see the buddha.

To give up yourself without regret is the greatest charity. To transcend motion and stillness is the highest meditation. Mortals keep moving, and arhats stay still.\(^57\) But the highest meditation surpasses both that of mortals and that of arhats. People who reach such understanding free themselves from all appearances without effort and cure all illnesses without treatment. Such is the power of great zen.

Using the mind to look for reality is delusion. Not using the mind to look for reality is awareness. Freeing oneself from words is liberation. Remaining unblemished by the dust of sensation is guarding the Dharma. Transcending life and death is leaving home.\(^58\)
生死名出家不受後有名得道不生妄想名涅槃不處

無明為大智慧無煩惱處名般涅槃無心相處名為彼

岸迷時有此岸若悟時無此岸何以故為凡夫一向住

此若覺最上乘者心不住此亦不住彼故能離於此彼

岸也若見彼岸異於此岸此人之心己得無禪定煩惱

名眾生悟解名菩提亦不一不異只隔具迷惑耳迷時

有世間可出悟時無世間可出平等法中不異凡夫異

於聖人經云平等法者凡夫不能入聖人不能行平等

法者唯有大菩薩與諸佛如來行也若見生異於死動

異於靜皆名不平等不見煩惱異於涅槃是名平等何

以故煩惱與涅槃同是一性空故是以小乘人妄斷煩
Not suffering another existence is reaching the Way. Not creating delusions is enlightenment. Not engaging in ignorance is wisdom. No affliction is nirvana. And no appearance of the mind is the other shore.

When you’re deluded, this shore exists. When you wake up, it doesn’t exist. Mortals stay on this shore. But those who discover the greatest of all vehicles stay on neither this shore nor the other shore. They’re able to leave both shores. Those who see the other shore as different from this shore don’t understand zen.

Delusion means mortality. And awareness means buddhahood. They’re not the same. And they’re not different. It’s just that people distinguish delusion from awareness. When we’re deluded there’s a world to escape. When we’re aware, there’s nothing to escape.

In the light of the impartial Dharma, mortals look no different from sages. The sutras say that the impartial Dharma is something that mortals can’t penetrate and sages can’t practice. The impartial Dharma is only practiced by great bodhisattvas and buddhas. To look on life as different from death or on motion as different from stillness is to be partial. To be impartial means to look on suffering as no different from nirvana, because the nature of both is emptiness. By imagining they’re putting an end to suffering and entering nirvana arhats end up trapped by nirvana. But bodhisattvas know
烦恼入涅槃为涅槃所滞菩萨知烦恼性空即不离空

烦恼常在涅槃涅槃不生涅槃不灭出离生死出

般涅槃心无去来即是涅槃知涅槃即空心诸佛

入涅槃者为在无妄想处菩萨入道场者即是无烦恼

处空闲处者即是无贪嗔痴也贪为欲界嗔为色界痴

无色界若一念心生即是无色界若一念心灭即是无色界

是知三界生灭万法有无皆由一心凡言一法者似破

瓦石竹木无情之物若知心是假名无有实体即知自

家之心亦非有亦非无何以故凡夫一向生心名

为有心一向灭心名无有心名无有心名此名中道是知

灭心名非有非无心非有非无心名此名为空
that suffering is essentially empty. And by remaining in emptiness they remain in nirvana. Nirvana means no birth and no death. It's beyond birth and death and beyond nirvana. When the mind stops moving, it enters nirvana. Nirvana is an empty mind. Where delusions don't exist, buddhas reach nirvana. Where afflictions don't exist, bodhisattvas enter the place of enlightenment.\textsuperscript{59}

An uninhabited place\textsuperscript{60} is one without greed, anger, or delusion. Greed is the realm of desire, anger the realm of form, and delusion the formless realm. When a thought begins, you enter the three realms. When a thought ends, you leave the three realms. The beginning or end of the three realms, the existence or nonexistence of anything, depends on the mind. This applies to everything, even to such inanimate objects as rocks and sticks.

Whoever knows that the mind is a fiction and devoid of anything real knows that his own mind neither exists nor doesn't exist. Mortals keep creating the mind, claiming it exists. And arhats keep negating the mind, claiming it doesn't exist. But bodhisattvas and buddhas neither create nor negate the mind. This is what's meant by the mind that neither exists nor doesn't exist. The mind that neither exists nor doesn't exist is called the Middle Way.\textsuperscript{61}
持心學法則心法俱迷不持心學法則心法俱悟凡迷
者迷於悟悟者悟於迷正見之人知心空無即超迷悟
無有迷悟始名正解正見色不自色由心故色心不自
心由色故心是知心色兩相俱生滅有者有於無無者
無於有是名貞見非貞見者無所不見亦無所見見滿
十方未曾有見何以故無所見故見無見故見非見故
凡夫所見皆名妄想若寂滅無貞見始名貞見心境相對
見生於中若內不起心則外不生境境心俱淨乃名貞
貞見作此解時乃名正解不見一切法乃名得道不解
一切法乃名解法何以故貞見與不貞見不貞故解與不
解俱不解故無貞見之見乃名貞見無解之解乃名大解
解
If you use your mind to study reality, you won’t understand either your mind or reality. If you study reality without using your mind, you’ll understand both. Those who don’t understand, don’t understand understanding. And those who understand, understand not understanding. People capable of true vision know that the mind is empty. They transcend both understanding and not understanding. The absence of both understanding and not understanding is true understanding.

Seen with true vision, form isn’t simply form, because form depends on mind. And mind isn’t simply mind, because mind depends on form. Mind and form create and negate each other. That which exists exists in relation to that which doesn’t exist. And that which doesn’t exist doesn’t exist in relation to that which exists. This is true vision. By means of such vision nothing is seen and nothing is not seen. Such vision reaches throughout the ten directions without seeing: because nothing is seen; because not seeing is seen; because seeing isn’t seeing. What mortals see are delusions. True vision is detached from seeing.

The mind and the world are opposites, and vision arises where they meet. When your mind doesn’t stir inside, the world doesn’t arise outside. When the world and the mind are both transparent, this is true vision. And such understanding is true understanding.

To see nothing is to perceive the Way, and to understand nothing is to know the Dharma, because seeing is neither seeing nor not seeing and because understanding is neither understanding nor not understanding. Seeing without seeing is true vision. Understanding without understanding is true understanding.
夫正見者非直見於見亦乃見於不見者非直解
於解亦乃解於無解凡有所解皆名不解無所解者始
名正解解與不解俱非解也經云不捨智慧名愚癡以
心為空解與不解俱是真以心為有解與不解俱是妄
若解時法逐人若不解時人逐法若法逐於人則非法
若法逐於人則法皆非法若人逐於法則法皆法
若法求心亦不將心求法亦不
將法求心亦不將心求法亦不
滅眾生心滅佛法生心生則真法滅心滅則真法生
已知一切法各各不相屬是名得道人知心不屬一切
True vision isn't just seeing seeing. It's also seeing not seeing. And true understanding isn't just understanding understanding. It's also understanding not understanding. If you understand anything, you don't understand. Only when you understand nothing is it true understanding. Understanding is neither understanding nor not understanding.

The sutras say, "Not to let go of wisdom is stupidity." When the mind doesn't exist, understanding and not understanding are both true. When the mind exists, understanding and not understanding are both false.

When you understand, reality depends on you. When you don't understand, you depend on reality. When reality depends on you, that which isn't real becomes real. When you depend on reality, that which is real becomes false. When you depend on reality, everything is false. When reality depends on you, everything is true. Thus, the sage doesn't use his mind to look for reality, or reality to look for his mind, or his mind to look for his mind, or reality to look for reality. His mind doesn't give rise to reality. And reality doesn't give rise to his mind. And because both his mind and reality are still, he's always in samadhi.63

When the mortal mind appears, buddhahood disappears. When the mortal mind disappears, buddhahood appears. When the mind appears, reality disappears. When the mind disappears, reality appears. Whoever knows that nothing depends on anything has found the Way. And whoever knows that the mind depends on nothing is always at the place of enlightenment.
法此人在道場迷時有罪解時無罪何以故罪性空
故若迷時無罪見罪若解時即罪非罪何以故罪無處
疑而生若作此解者前世罪業即爲消滅迷時六識
五陰皆是煩惱生死法悟時六識五陰皆是涅槃無生
死法修道人不外求道何以故知心是道若得心時無
心可得若得道時無道可得若言將心求道得者皆名
邪見迷時有佛有法悟無佛無法何以故悟即は佛法
夫修道者身滅道成亦如甲折樹生。此業報身念念無
常無一定法但隨念修之亦如甲折樹生。此業報身念念無
死但念念之中不得妄想則生證有餘涅槃。死入無生
死。
When you don’t understand, you’re wrong. When you understand, you’re not wrong. This is because the nature of wrong is empty. When you don’t understand, right seems wrong. When you understand, wrong isn’t wrong, because wrong doesn’t exist. The sutras say, “Nothing has a nature of its own.” Act. Don’t question. When you question, you’re wrong. Wrong is the result of questioning. When you reach such an understanding, the wrong deeds of your past lives are wiped away. When you’re deluded, the six senses and five shades⁶⁴ are constructs of suffering and mortality. When you wake up, the six senses and five shades are constructs of nirvana and immortality.

Someone who seeks the Way doesn’t look beyond himself. He knows that the mind is the Way. But when he finds the mind, he finds nothing. And when he finds the Way, he finds nothing. If you think you can use the mind to find the Way, you’re deluded. When you’re deluded, buddhahood exists. When you’re aware, it doesn’t exist. This is because awareness is buddhahood.

If you’re looking for the Way, the Way won’t appear until your body disappears. It’s like stripping bark from a tree. This karmic body undergoes constant change. It has no fixed reality. Practice according to your thoughts. Don’t hate life and death or love life and death. Keep your every thought free of delusion, and in life you’ll witness the beginning of nirvana,⁶⁵ and in death you’ll experience the assurance of no rebirth.⁶⁶
To see form but not be corrupted by form or to hear sound but not be corrupted by sound is liberation. Eyes that aren't attached to form are the Gates of Zen. Ears that aren't attached to sound are also the Gates of Zen. In short, those who perceive the existence and nature of phenomena and remain unattached are liberated. Those who perceive the external appearance of phenomena are at their mercy. Not to be subject to affliction is what's meant by liberation. There's no other liberation. When you know how to look at form, form doesn't give rise to mind and mind doesn't give rise to form. Form and mind are both pure.

When delusions are absent, the mind is the land of buddhas. When delusions are present, the mind is hell. Mortals create delusions. And by using the mind to give birth to mind they always find themselves in hell. Bodhisattvas see through delusions. And by not using the mind to give birth to mind they always find themselves in the land of buddhas. If you don't use your mind to create mind, every state of mind is empty and every thought is still. You go from one buddha-land to another. If you use your mind to create mind, every state of mind is disturbed and every thought is in motion. You go from one hell to the next. When a thought arises, there's good karma and bad karma, heaven and hell. When no thought arises, there's no good karma or bad karma, no heaven or hell.

The body neither exists nor doesn't exist. Hence existence as
a mortal and nonexistence as a sage are conceptions with which a sage has nothing to do. His heart is empty and spacious as the sky.

That which follows is witnessed on the Way. It's beyond the ken of arhats and mortals.

When the mind reaches nirvana, you don't see nirvana, because the mind is nirvana. If you see nirvana somewhere outside the mind, you're deluding yourself.

Every suffering is a buddha-seed, because suffering impels mortals to seek wisdom. But you can only say that suffering gives rise to buddhahood. You can't say that suffering is buddhahood. Your body and mind are the field. Suffering is the seed, wisdom the sprout, and buddhahood the grain.

The buddha in the mind is like a fragrance in a tree. The buddha comes from a mind free of suffering, just as a fragrance comes from a tree free of decay. There's no fragrance without the tree and no buddha without the mind. If there's a fragrance without a tree, it's a different fragrance. If there's a buddha without your mind, it's a different buddha.

When the three poisons are present in your mind, you live in a land of filth. When the three poisons are absent from your mind, you live in a land of purity. The sutras say, "If you fill a land with impurity and filth, no buddha will ever appear." Impurity and filth
即無明三毒是諸佛世尊者，即清淨覺悟心是一切言
語無非佛法若能無其所言，而盡日言是道若能有其
所言即終日默而非道是故如來言不乘默默不乘言
言不離默悟此言默者皆在三昧若知時而言言亦解
脫若不知時而默默亦繫縛是故言若離相言亦名解
能就繫縛繫縛自本來未就文字法無高下若見高下
非法也非法為筏是法為筏者人乘其筏者卽得渡
於非法則是法也若世俗言卽有男女貴賤以道言之
即無男女貴賤以是天女悟道不變女形車匿解真寧
移賤稱乎此蓋非男女貴賤皆由一相也天女於十二
refer to delusion and the other poisons. A buddha refers to a pure and awakened mind.

There's no language that isn't the Dharma. To talk all day without saying anything is the Way. To be silent all day and still say something isn't the Way. Hence neither does a tathagata's speech depend on silence, nor does his silence depend on speech, nor does his speech exist apart from his silence. Those who understand both speech and silence are in samadhi. If you speak when you know, your speech is free. If you're silent when you don't know, your silence is tied. If speech isn't attached to appearances, it's free. If silence is attached to appearances, it's tied. Language is essentially free. It has nothing to do with attachment. And attachment has nothing to do with language.

Reality has no high or low. If you see high or low, it isn't real. A raft isn't real. But a passenger raft is. A person who rides such a raft can cross that which isn't real. That's why it's real.

According to the world there's male and female, rich and poor. According to the Way there's no male or female, no rich or poor. When the goddess realized the Way, she didn't change her sex. When the stable boy awakened to the Truth, he didn't change his status. Free of sex and status, they shared the same basic appearance. The goddess searched twelve years for her womanhood.
年中求女相了不可得知於十二年中求男相亦不
如離水無冰亦如離冰無水凡言離心者非是遠離於
心但使不著心相於云不見相名為見佛即離心相
也離心無佛者言佛從心出心能生佛然佛從心生而
心未嘗生於佛亦如魚生於水水不生於魚欲觀於魚
見魚者忘於水已見佛者忘於心若不忘於心尚為心
所惑若不忘於水尚被水所迷眾生與菩提亦如冰之
與水為三毒所煑即名眾生為三解脫所淨即名菩提
為三冬所凍即名為冰為三夏所消即名為水若捨卻
without success. To search twelve years for one's manhood would likewise be fruitless. The twelve years refer to the twelve entrances.\textsuperscript{70}

Without the mind there's no buddha. Without the buddha there's no mind. Likewise, without water there's no ice, and without ice there's no water. Whoever talks about leaving the mind doesn't get very far. Don't become attached to appearances of the mind. The sutras say, "When you see no appearance, you see the buddha." This is what's meant by being free from appearances of the mind.

*Without the mind there's no buddha* means that the buddha comes from the mind. The mind gives birth to the buddha. But although the buddha comes from the mind, the mind doesn't come from the buddha, just as fish come from water, but water doesn't come from fish. Whoever talks about leaving the mind doesn't get very far. Don't become attached to appearances of the mind. The sutras say, "When you see no appearance, you see the buddha." This is what's meant by being free from appearances of the mind.

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Mortality and buddhahood are like water and ice. To be afflicted by the three poisons is mortality. To be purified by the three releases\textsuperscript{71} is buddhahood. That which freezes into ice in winter melts into water in summer. Eliminate ice and there's no
未见
more water. Get rid of mortality and there's no more buddhahood. Clearly, the nature of ice is the nature of water. And the nature of water is the nature of ice. And the nature of mortality is the nature of buddhahood. Mortality and buddhahood share the same nature, just as wutou and futzu\textsuperscript{72} share the same root but not the same season. It's only because of the delusion of differences that we have the words \textit{mortality} and \textit{buddhahood}. When a snake becomes a dragon, it doesn't change its scales. And when a mortal becomes a sage, he doesn't change his face. He knows his mind through internal wisdom and takes care of his body through external discipline.

Mortals liberate buddhas and buddhas liberate mortals. This is what's meant by impartiality. Mortals liberate buddhas because affliction creates awareness. And buddhas liberate mortals because awareness negates affliction. There can't help but be affliction. And there can't help but be awareness. If it weren't for affliction, there would be nothing to create awareness. And if it weren't for awareness, there would be nothing to negate affliction. When you're deluded, buddhas liberate mortals. When you're aware, mortals liberate buddhas. Buddhas don't become buddhas on their own. They're liberated by mortals. Buddhas regard delusion as their father and greed as their mother. Delusion and greed are different names for mortality. Delusion and mortality are like the left hand and the right hand. There's no other difference.

When you're deluded, you're on this shore. When you're
此岸悟時在彼岸若知心空不見相則離迷惑悟既離迷惑亦無彼岸如來不在此岸亦不在彼岸不在中流中流者小乘人也此岸者凡夫彼岸菩提也佛有三身化身現修智慧時即報身現覺無為即法身常現飛騰十方隨宜救濟者化身佛也若斷惑即是以雪山成道報身佛也無論無說無作無得湛然常住法身佛也若論至理一佛皆無何得有三此謂三身者但據人智也人有上中下說下智之人妄興福力也妄見化身佛中智之人妄斷煩惱妄見報身佛上智之人妄證菩提妄見法身佛上智之人內照圓明心即佛不待心而見
aware, you’re on the other shore. But once you know your mind is empty and you see no appearances, you’re beyond delusion and awareness. And once you’re beyond delusion and awareness, the other shore doesn’t exist. The tathagata isn’t on this shore or the other shore. And he isn’t in midstream. Arhats are in midstream and mortals are on this shore. On the other shore is buddhahood.

Buddhas have three bodies: a transformation body, a reward body, and a real body. The transformation body is also called the incarnation body. The transformation body appears when mortals do good deeds, the reward body when they cultivate wisdom, and the real body when they become aware of the sublime. The transformation body is the one you see flying in all directions rescuing others wherever it can. The reward body puts an end to doubts. The Great Enlightenment occurred in the Himalayas suddenly becomes true. The real body doesn’t do or say anything. It remains perfectly still. But actually, there’s not even one buddha-body, much less three. This talk of three bodies is simply based on human understanding, which can be shallow, moderate, or deep.

People of shallow understanding imagine they’re piling up blessings and mistake the transformation body for the buddha. People of moderate understanding imagine they’re putting an end to suffering and mistake the reward body for the buddha. And people of deep understanding imagine they’re experiencing buddhahood and mistake the real body for the buddha. But people of the deepest understanding look within, distracted by nothing. Since a clear mind is the buddha, they attain the understanding of a buddha without using the mind. The three bodies, like all other things, are
得佛知三身與萬法皆不可取不可說此即解脫心

成於大道經云佛不說法不度眾生不證菩提此之謂

時唯有至人於此身中不造諸業故不造業故不造業

不造自然得道豈虛言哉人能造業今不能造人若

人造人由業生人若不造業即業無由生人若不造

能弘道道不能弘人今之凡夫往往造業妄語無報號

至少不苦哉若以少而理前心造後心報何有脫時

若前心不造即後心無報復妄見業報經云雖信有

佛言佛苦行是名邪見雖信有佛言佛有金鈎馬麥之
unattainable and indescribable. The unimpeded mind reaches the Way. The sutras say, "Buddhas don't preach the Dharma. They don't liberate mortals. And they don't experience buddhahood." This is what I mean.

Individuals create karma; karma doesn't create individuals. They create karma in this life and receive their reward in the next. They never escape. Only someone who's perfect creates no karma in this life and receives no reward. The sutras say, "Who creates no karma obtains the Dharma." This isn't an empty saying. You can create karma, but you can't create a person. When you create karma, you're reborn along with your karma. When you don't create karma, you vanish along with your karma. Hence, with karma dependent on the individual and the individual dependent on karma, if an individual doesn't create karma, karma has no hold on him. In the same manner, "A person can enlarge the Way. The Way can't enlarge a person." 

Mortals keep creating karma and mistakenly insist that there's no retribution. But can they deny suffering? Can they deny that what the present state of mind sows the next state of mind reaps? How can they escape? But if the present state of mind sows nothing, the next state of mind reaps nothing. Don't misconceive karma.

The sutras say, "Despite believing in buddhas, people who imagine that buddhas practice austerities aren't Buddhists. The same holds for those who imagine that buddhas are subject to
報是名信不具足名一闢提解聖法名為聖人解凡法者名為凡夫但能捨凡法就聖法即凡夫成聖人矣
世間愚人但欲遠求聖人不信慧解之心為聖人也經
云無智人中莫說此經經云心也法也無智之人不信
此心解法成於聖人但欲遠外求學愛慕空中佛像光
明香色等事皆墮邪見失心狂亂經云若見諸相非相
即見如來八萬四千法門盡由一心而起若心相內淨
猶如虛空即出離身心內八萬四千煩惱為病本也凡
夫當生憂死飽臨愁飢皆名大惑所以聖人不謀其前
不慮其後無戀當今念念歸道若未悟此大理想者即須
早求人天之善無令兩失
達磨大師悟性論終
rewards of wealth or poverty. They’re icchantikas. They’re incapable of belief.”

Someone who understands the teaching of sages is a sage. Someone who understands the teaching of mortals is a mortal. A mortal who can give up the teaching of mortals and follow the teaching of sages becomes a sage. But the fools of this world prefer to look for sages far away. They don’t believe that the wisdom of their own mind is the sage. The sutras say, “Among men of no understanding, don’t preach this sutra.” And the sutras say, “Mind is the teaching.” But people of no understanding don’t believe in their own mind or that by understanding this teaching they can become a sage. They prefer to look for distant knowledge and long for things in space, buddha-images, light, incense, and colors. They fall prey to falsehood and lose their minds to insanity.

The sutras say, “When you see that all appearances are not appearances, you see the tathagata.” The myriad doors to the truth all come from the mind. When appearances of the mind are as transparent as space, they’re gone.

Our endless sufferings are the roots of illness. When mortals are alive, they worry about death. When they’re full, they worry about hunger. Theirs is the Great Uncertainty. But sages don’t consider the past. And they don’t worry about the future. Nor do they cling to the present. And from moment to moment they follow the Way. If you haven’t awakened to this great truth, you’d better look for a teacher on earth or in the heavens. Don’t compound your own deficiency.
論曰。若復有人志求佛道者。當修何法。最為省要。答曰。
唯觀心。一法。總攝諸法。最為省要。問曰。何一法能攝諸
心。則萬法俱備。猶如大樹。所有枝條。及諸花果。皆悉依
根栽樹者存根。而始生子。伐樹者去根。而必死若了心
修道。則少力而易成不了。心而修。費功而無益。故知一
切善惡皆由自心。外別求終無是處。問曰。云何觀心。稱之為。了答。菩薩摩訶薩
行。深般若波羅蜜。多時了。四大五陰。本空無我。了見自心起用。有二
If someone is determined to reach enlightenment, what is the most essential method he can practice?

The most essential method, which includes all other methods, is beholding the mind.

But how can one method include all others?

The mind is the root from which all things grow. If you can understand the mind, everything else is included. It’s like the root of a tree. All a tree’s fruit and flowers, branches and leaves depend on its root. If you nourish its root, a tree multiplies. If you cut its root, it dies. Those who understand the mind reach enlightenment with minimal effort. Those who don’t understand the mind practice in vain. Everything good and bad comes from your own mind. To find something beyond the mind is impossible.

But how can beholding the mind be called understanding?

When a great bodhisattva delves deeply into perfect wisdom, he realizes that the four elements and five shades are devoid of a personal self. And he realizes that the activity of his mind has two aspects: pure and impure. By their very nature, these two mental
種差別云何為二一者淨心二者染心此二種心法
自然本來俱有雖假緣合互相因待淨心恆樂善因染
心常思惡業若不受所染則稱之為聖遂能遠離諸苦
證涅槃樂若墮染心造業受其纏覆則名之為凡沈淪
三界受種種苦何以故由彼染心障貞如體故十地經
云眾生身中有金剛佛性猶如日輪體明圓滿廣大無
邊只為五陰重雲所覆如鉛內燈光不能顯現又涅槃
經云一切眾生悉有佛性無明覆故不得解脫佛性者
即覺性也但自覺覺他覺知明了則名解脫故知一切
諸善以覺為根因其覺根遂能顯現諸功德樹涅槃之
果德因此而成如是觀心可名為了。
states are always present. They alternate as cause or effect depending on conditions, the pure mind delighting in good deeds, the impure mind thinking of evil. Those who aren’t affected by impurity are sages. They transcend suffering and experience the bliss of nirvana. All others, trapped by the impure mind and entangled by their own karma, are mortals. They drift through the three realms and suffer countless afflictions, and all because their impure mind obscures their real self.

The *Sutra of Ten Stages* says, “In the body of mortals is the indestructible buddha-nature. Like the sun, its light fills endless space. But once veiled by the dark clouds of the five shades, it’s like a light inside a jar, hidden from view.” And the *Nirvana Sutra* says, “All mortals have the buddha-nature. But it’s covered by darkness from which they can’t escape. Our buddha-nature is awareness: to be aware and to make others aware. To realize awareness is liberation.” Everything good has awareness for its root. And from this root of awareness grow the tree of all virtues and the fruit of nirvana. Beholding the mind like this is understanding.
問上說真如佛性一切功德因覺為根未審無明之心
以何為根答無明之心雖有八萬四千煩惱情欲及恒
河沙眾惡皆因三毒以爲根本其三毒者貪嗔癡是也
此三毒心自能具足一切諸惡如大樹根雖是一所
生枝葉其數無邊彼三毒根一一根中生諸惡業百千
萬億倍過於前不可爲喻如是三毒心於本體中應現
六根亦名六賊卽六識也由此六識出入諸根貪著萬
境能成惡業障真如體故名六賊一切眾生由此三毒
六賊熱亂身心沈沒生死輪迴六趣受諸苦惱猶如江
河因小泉源漸流不絕乃能彌漫波濤萬里若復有人
斷其本源卽衆流皆息求解脫者能轉三毒爲三聚淨
You say that our true buddha-nature and all virtues have awareness for their root. But what is the root of ignorance?

The ignorant mind, with its infinite afflictions, passions, and evils, is rooted in the three poisons: greed, anger, and delusion. These three poisoned states of mind themselves include countless evils, like trees that have a single trunk but countless branches and leaves. Yet each poison produces so many more millions of evils that the example of a tree is hardly a fitting comparison.

The three poisons are present in our six sense organs as six kinds of consciousness, or thieves. They’re called thieves because they pass in and out of the gates of the senses, covet limitless possessions, engage in evil, and mask their true identity. And because mortals are misled in body and mind by these poisons or thieves, they become lost in life and death, wander through the six states of existence, and suffer countless afflictions. These afflictions are like rivers that surge for a thousand miles because of the constant flow of small springs. But if someone cuts off their source, rivers dry up. And if someone who seeks liberation can turn the three poisons into the three sets of precepts and the six thieves into
戒轉六貳為六波羅蜜自然永離一切諸苦。問六趣三界廣大無邊若唯觀心何由免無窮之苦答三界業報唯心所生本若無心於三界中則出三界其三界者卽三毒也貪為欲界嗔為色界癡為無色界故名三界由此三毒造業輕重受報不同分歸六處故名六趣問云何輕重分之為六答眾生不了正因迷心修善未免三界生三輕趣云何三輕趣所謂迷修十善妄求快樂未免貪界生於天趣迷持五戒妄起愛憎未免瞋界生於人趣迷執有為信邪求福未免痴界生阿修羅趣如是三類名三輕趣云何三重所謂縱三毒心唯造惡
the six paramitas, he rids himself of affliction once and for all.

But the three realms and six states of existence are infinitely vast. How can we escape their endless afflictions if all we do is behold the mind?

The karma of the three realms comes from the mind alone. If your mind isn’t within the three realms, it’s beyond them. The three realms correspond to the three poisons: greed corresponds to the realm of desire, anger to the realm of form, and delusion to the formless realm. And because karma created by the poisons can be gentle or heavy, these three realms are further divided into six places known as the six states of existence.

And how does the karma of these six differ?

Mortals who don’t understand true practice and blindly perform good deeds are born into the three higher states of existence within the three realms. And what are these three higher states? Those who blindly perform the ten good deeds and foolishly seek happiness are born as gods in the realm of desire. Those who blindly observe the five precepts and foolishly indulge in love and hate are born as men in the realm of anger. And those who blindly cling to the phenomenal world, believe in false doctrines, and pray for blessings are born as demons in the realm of delusion. These are the three higher states of existence.

And what are the three lower states? They’re where those who persist in poisoned thoughts and evil deeds are born. Those
趣業重者，墮畜生趣如是三重通前三軽遂成六趣。
故知一切苦業由自心生，但能攝心離諸邪惡；
趣輪廻之苦，自然消滅離苦，即得解脫。
問如佛所說，我於三大阿僧祇劫，無量勤苦方成佛道。
云何今說，唯觀心制三毒，即名解脫答佛所說，言無
虛妄也。阿僧祇劫者，卽三毒心也。胡言阿僧祇漢名不
可數，此三毒心於中有三毒惡念於一念中，皆為一
劫如是，恒沙不可數也。故言，三大阿僧祇漢名不
被三毒之所蓋，若不超彼三大恆沙毒惡之心。今何
名為解脫，今若能轉貪嗔癡等三毒心，為三解脫是則
如是。
whose karma from greed is greatest become hungry ghosts. Those whose karma from anger is greatest become sufferers in hell. And those whose karma from delusion is greatest become beasts. These three lower states together with the previous three higher states form the six states of existence. From this you should realize that all karma, painful or otherwise, comes from your own mind. If you can just concentrate your mind and transcend its falsehood and evil, the suffering of the three realms and six states of existence will automatically disappear. And once free from suffering, you’re truly free.

But the Buddha said, “Only after undergoing innumerable hardships for three asankhya kalpas did I achieve enlightenment.” Why do you now say that simply beholding the mind and overcoming the three poisons is liberation?

The words of the Buddha are true. But the three asankhya kalpas refer to the three poisoned states of mind. What we call asankhya in Sanskrit you call countless. Within these three poisoned states of mind are countless evil thoughts. And every thought lasts a kalpa. Such an infinity is what the Buddha meant by the three asankhya kalpas.

Once your real self becomes obscured by the three poisons, how can you be called liberated until you overcome their countless evil thoughts? People who can transform the three poisons of greed, anger, and delusion into the three releases are said to pass through the three asankhya kalpas. But people of this final age are the
問菩薩摩訶薩由持三聚淨戒行六波羅蜜功成佛道者即制三毒心也制三毒成無量善聚聚者會也無量善法普會於心故名三聚淨戒六波羅蜜者即淨六根也胡名波羅蜜漢名達彼岸以六根清淨不染六塵即度度一眾生今者唯言制三毒心豈不文義有乖也答。
densest of fools. They don’t understand what the Tathagata really meant by the three asankhya kalpas. They say enlightenment is only achieved after endless kalpas and thereby mislead disciples to retreat on the path to buddhahood.

*But the great bodhisattvas have achieved enlightenment only by observing the three sets of precepts* and practicing the six paramitas. Now you tell disciples merely to behold the mind. How can anyone reach enlightenment without cultivating the rules of discipline?

The three sets of precepts are for overcoming the three poisoned states of mind. When you overcome these poisons, you create three sets of limitless virtue. A set gathers things together—in this case, countless good thoughts throughout your mind. And the six paramitas are for purifying the six senses. What we call *paramitas* you call *means to the other shore.* By purifying your six senses of the dust of sensation, the paramitas ferry you across the River of Affliction to the Shore of Enlightenment.

*According to the sutras, the three sets of precepts are, “I vow to put an end to all evils. I vow to cultivate all virtues. And I vow to liberate all beings.”* But now you say they’re only for controlling the three poisoned states of mind. Isn’t this contrary to the meaning of the scriptures?
佛所説是真實語菩薩摩诃薩於過去因中修行時為
對三毒發三誓願持一切淨戒，對於貪毒誓斷一切惡
常修定，對於瞋毒誓修一切善，常修慧對於癡毒度一
切眾生，由持如是戒定慧等三種淨法故能超彼三毒
成佛道也，以能制三毒則諸惡消滅名為斷。能持三
聚淨戒則諸善具足名之為修以能斷、惡修善則萬行
成就自利利他種種眾生故名解脫則知所修戒行不
離於心若自心清淨則一切佛土皆悉清淨故經云心
垢則眾生垢心淨則眾生淨欲得佛土當淨其心隨其
心淨則佛土淨也故能制毒則三聚淨戒自然成就
問日如經所説六波羅蜜者亦名六度所謂布施持戒
The sutras of the Buddha are true. But long ago, when that great bodhisattva was cultivating the seed of enlightenment, it was to counter the three poisons that he made his three vows. Practicing moral prohibitions to counter the poison of greed, he vowed to put an end to all evils. Practicing meditation to counter the poison of anger, he vowed to cultivate all virtues. And practicing wisdom to counter the poison of delusion, he vowed to liberate all beings. Because he persevered in these three pure practices of morality, meditation, and wisdom, he was able to overcome the three poisons and reach enlightenment. By overcoming the three poisons he wiped out everything sinful and thus put an end to evil. By observing the three sets of precepts he did nothing but good and thus cultivated virtue. And by putting an end to evil and cultivating virtue he consummated all practices, benefited himself as well as others, and rescued mortals everywhere. Thus he liberated beings.

You should realize that the practice you cultivate doesn’t exist apart from your mind. If your mind is pure, all buddha-lands are pure. The sutras say, “If their minds are impure, beings are impure. If their minds are pure, beings are pure.” And “To reach a buddha-land, purify your mind. As your mind becomes pure, buddha-lands become pure.” Thus by overcoming the three poisoned states of mind the three sets of precepts are automatically fulfilled.

*But the sutras say the six paramitas are charity, morality,*
patience, devotion, meditation, and wisdom. Now you say the paramitas refer to the purification of the senses. What do you mean by this? And why are they called ferries?

Cultivating the paramitas means purifying the six senses by overcoming the six thieves. Casting out the thief of the eye by abandoning the visual world is charity. Keeping out the thief of the ear by not listening to sounds is morality. Humbling the thief of the nose by equating all smells as neutral is patience. Controlling the thief of the mouth by conquering desires to taste, praise, and explain is devotion. Quelling the thief of the body by remaining unmoved by sensations of touch is meditation. And taming the thief of the mind by not yielding to delusions but practicing wakefulness is wisdom. These six paramitas are transports. Like boats or rafts, they transport beings to the other shore. Hence they’re called ferries.

But when Shakyamuni was a bodhisattva, he consumed three bowls of milk and six ladles of gruel prior to attaining enlightenment. If he had to drink milk before he could taste the fruit of buddhahood, how can merely beholding the mind result in liberation?

What you say is true. That is how he attained enlightenment. He had to drink milk before he could become a buddha. But there are two kinds of milk. That which Shakyamuni drank wasn’t
ordinary impure milk but pure dharma-milk. The three bowls were the three sets of precepts. And the six ladles were the six paramitas. When Shakyamuni attained enlightenment, it was because he drank this pure dharma-milk that he tasted the fruit of buddhahood. To say that the Tathagata drank the worldly concoction of impure, rank-smelling cow's milk is the height of slander. That which is truly so, the indestructible, passionless dharma-self, remains forever free of the world's afflictions. Why would it need impure milk to satisfy its hunger or thirst?

The sutras say, "This ox doesn't live in the highlands or the lowlands. It doesn't eat grain or chaff. And it doesn't graze with cows. The body of this ox is the color of burnished gold." The ox refers to Vairocana. Owing to his great compassion for all beings, he produces from within his pure dharma-body the sublime dharma-milk of the three sets of precepts and six paramitas to nourish all those who seek liberation. The pure milk of such a truly pure ox not only enabled the Tathagata to achieve buddhahood but also enables any being who drinks it to attain unexcelled, complete enlightenment.
然燈書夜六時造塔行道持齋禮拜種種功德皆成佛
道若唯觀心總攝諸行說如是事應虛空也答佛所說
經有無量方便以一切眾生純根狹劣不悟甚深之義
所以假有為喻無為若復不修內行唯外求希望獲
福無有是處言伽藍者西國梵語此土翻為清淨地也
若永除三毒常淨六根身心湛然內外清淨是名修伽
藍鐵像形像者即是一切眾生求佛道也所為修諸覺
行彷像如來真容妙相豈造鐵像金銅之所作也是故
求解脫者以身為爐以法為火以智慧為巧匠三聚淨
戒六波羅蜜以為模樣鍊身中真如佛性遍入一切
Throughout the sutras the Buddha tells mortals they can achieve enlightenment by performing such meritorious works as building monasteries, casting statues, burning incense, scattering flowers, lighting eternal lamps, practicing all six periods of the day and night, walking around stupas, observing fasts, and worshipping. But if beholding the mind includes all other practices, then such works as these would appear redundant.

The sutras of the Buddha contain countless metaphors. Because mortals have shallow minds and don’t understand anything deep, the Buddha used the tangible to represent the sublime. People who seek blessings by concentrating on external works instead of internal cultivation are attempting the impossible.

What you call a monastery we call a sangharama, a place of purity. But whoever denies entry to the three poisons and keeps the gates of his senses pure, his body and mind still, inside and outside clean, builds a monastery.

Casting statues refers to all practices cultivated by those who seek enlightenment. The Tathagata’s sublime form can’t be represented by metal. Those who seek enlightenment regard their bodies as the furnace, the Dharma as the fire, wisdom as the craftsmanship, and the three sets of precepts and six paramitas as the mold. They smelt and refine the true buddha-nature within themselves and
pour it into the mold formed by the rules of discipline. Acting in perfect accordance with the Buddha’s teaching, they naturally create a perfect likeness. The eternal, sublime body isn’t subject to conditions or decay. If you seek the Truth but don’t learn how to make a true likeness, what will you use in its place?

And burning incense doesn’t mean ordinary material incense but the incense of the intangible Dharma, which drives away filth, ignorance, and evil deeds with its perfume. There are five kinds of such dharma-incense. First is the incense of morality, which means renouncing evil and cultivating virtue. Second is the incense of meditation, which means deeply believing in the Mahayana with unwavering resolve. Third is the incense of wisdom, which means contemplating the body and mind, inside and out. Fourth is the incense of liberation, which means severing the bonds of ignorance. And fifth is the incense of perfect knowledge, which means being always aware and nowhere obstructed. These five are the most precious kinds of incense and far superior to anything the world has to offer.

When the Buddha was in the world, he told his disciples to light such precious incense with the fire of awareness as an offering to the buddhas of the ten directions. But people today don’t understand the Tathagata’s real meaning. They use an ordinary flame to light material incense of sandalwood or frankincense and pray for some future blessing that never comes.
檀薰陸質礙之香，希望福報云何得散花者義亦如是。

所謂常說正法，諸功德花饒益有情散沾一切於真如

性普施莊嚴此功德花，佛所讚歎究竟常住無彌落期。

若復有人散如是花，獲福無量若言如來令眾生剪截，

德彩傷損草木，以為散花無有是處，所以者何，持淨戒

者於諸大地森羅萬像不令觸犯。謬犯者猶獲大罪況

復今者故毀淨戒，傷萬物求於福報欲益返損，凡是有

乎又長明燈者卽正覺心，也以覺明了喻之為燈，是故

一切求解脫者，以身為燈，心為燈，增諸戒行。以是

添油智慧明達，喻如燈火，當燃如是真正覺燈照破一

切無明，癡暗能以此法轉相開示，卽是一燈燃百千燈。
For scattering flowers the same holds true. This refers to speaking the Dharma, scattering flowers of virtue, in order to benefit others and glorify the real self. These flowers of virtue are those praised by the Buddha. They last forever and never fade. And whoever scatters such flowers reaps infinite blessings. If you think the Tathagata meant for people to harm plants by cutting off their flowers, you’re wrong. Those who observe the precepts don’t injure any of the myriad life forms of heaven and earth. If you hurt something by mistake, you suffer for it. But those who intentionally break the precepts by injuring the living for the sake of future blessings suffer even more. How could they let would-be blessings turn into sorrows?

The eternal lamp represents perfect awareness. Likening the illumination of awareness to that of a lamp, those who seek liberation see their body as the lamp, their mind as its wick, the addition of discipline as its oil, and the power of wisdom as its flame. By lighting this lamp of perfect awareness they dispel all darkness and delusion. And by passing this dharma on to others they’re able to use one lamp to light thousands of lamps. And because these lamps likewise light countless other lamps, their light lasts forever.
以燈續然然燈無盡故號長明過去有佛名曰然燈義
亦如是愚癡眾生不會如來方便之說專行虛妄執著
有為逐燃世間蘇油之燈以照空室乃稱依教豈不谬
豈假如是蘇油之燈以為利益審察斯理應不然乎又
六時行道者所調六根之中於一切時常行佛道修諸
覺行調伏六根長時不捨名為六時達道行者塔是
身心也當令覺慧巡遶身心念念不停名為達塔過去
諸聖皆行此道得至涅槃今時世人不會此理曾不內
行唯執外求將質礙身達世間塔日夜走騷徒自疲勞
而於真性一無利益又持齋者當須會意不達斯理徒
Long ago, there was a buddha named Dipamkara, or Lamp-lighter. This was the meaning of his name. But fools don’t understand the metaphors of the Tathagata. Persisting in delusions and clinging to the tangible, they light lamps of everyday vegetable oil and think that by illuminating the interiors of buildings they’re following the Buddha’s teaching. How foolish! The light released by a buddha from one curl between his brows can illuminate countless worlds. An oil lamp is no help. Or do you think otherwise?

Practicing all six periods of the day and night means constantly cultivating enlightenment among the six senses and persevering in every form of awareness. Never relaxing control over the six senses is what’s meant by all six periods.

As for walking around stupas, the stupa is your body and mind. When your awareness circles your body and mind without stopping, this is called walking around a stupa. The sages of long ago followed this path to nirvana. But people today don’t understand what this means. Instead of looking inside they insist on looking outside. They use their material bodies to walk around material stupas. And they keep at it day and night, wearing themselves out in vain and coming no closer to their real self.

The same holds true for observing a fast. It’s useless unless you understand what this really means. To fast means to regulate,
to regulate your body and mind so that they're not distracted or disturbed. And to observe means to uphold, to uphold the rules of discipline according to the Dharma. Fasting means guarding against the six attractions\(^9\) on the outside and the three poisons on the inside and striving through contemplation to purify your body and mind.

Fasting also includes five kinds of food. First there's delight in the Dharma. This is the delight that comes from acting in accordance with the Dharma. Second is harmony in meditation. This is the harmony of body and mind that comes from seeing through subject and object. Third is invocation, the invocation of buddhas with both your mouth and your mind. Fourth is resolution, the resolution to pursue virtue whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down: And fifth is liberation, the liberation of your mind from worldly contamination. These five are the foods of fasting. Unless a person eats these five pure foods, he's wrong to think he's fasting.

Also, once you stop eating the food of delusion, if you touch it again you break your fast. And once you break it, you reap no blessing from it. The world is full of deluded people who don't see this. They indulge their body and mind in all manner of evil. They give free rein to their passions and have no shame. And when they stop eating ordinary food, they call it fasting. How absurd!

It's the same with worshipping. You have to understand the
法者敬也，拜者伏也。所謂恭敬之性屈伏無名。為禮拜若能懲情永滅善念恒存雖不現相名為禮拜。其相即法相也。世尊欲令世俗表謙下心。亦為禮拜故。須屈伏外身示內恭敬舉外明內性相相應若復不行。理法唯執外求內則放縱豔常為惡業外郎空勞身。相詐現威儀無懶於聖徒詫於凡不免輪迴豈成功德。問如溫室經說洗浴眾僧獲福無量此則憑於事法功德有為事也。世尊敷設諸弟子說。溫室經欲令受持洗浴之法故假世事比喻真宗隱說七事供養功德其七。
meaning and adapt to conditions. Meaning includes action and nonaction. Whoever understands this follows the Dharma.

Worship means reverence and humility. It means revering your real self and humbling delusions. If you can wipe out evil desires and harbor good thoughts, even if nothing shows, it's worship. Such form is its real form.

The Lord wanted worldly people to think of worship as expressing humility and subduing the mind. So he told them to prostrate their bodies to show their reverence, to let the external express the internal, to harmonize essence and form. Those who fail to cultivate the inner meaning and concentrate instead on the outward expression never stop indulging in ignorance, hatred, and evil while exhausting themselves to no avail. They can deceive others with postures, remain shameless before sages and vain before mortals, but they'll never escape the Wheel, much less achieve any merit.

But the Bathhouse Sutra says, "By contributing to the bathing of monks, people receive limitless blessings." This would appear to be an instance of external practice achieving merit. How does this relate to beholding the mind?

Here, the bathing of monks doesn't refer to the washing of anything tangible. When the Lord preached the Bathhouse Sutra, he wanted his disciples to remember the dharma of washing. So he used an everyday concern to convey his real meaning, which he couched in his explanation of merit from seven offerings. Of these
事云何一者淨水二者焼火三者澡豆四者楊枝五者

淨灰六者蘇臁七者內衣以此七法喻於七事一切眾生由此七法沐浴莊嚴能除毒心無明垢礎其七法者

一者謂淨戒洗蕩僧非猶如淨水灌諸塵垢二者智慧

觀察內外猶如然火能溫淨水三者分別簡棄諸惡猶

如澡豆能淨垢膩四者真實斷諸妄想如嚼楊枝能淨

口氣五者正信決定無疑猶如淨灰摩身能辟諸風六

者謂柔和忍辱猶如蘇臁通潤皮膚七者謂慚愧悔諸

惡業猶如內衣遮醜形體如上七法是經中秘密之義

如來當爾為諸大乘利根者說非為小智下劣凡夫所

以今人無能解悟其溫室者卽身是也所以燃智慧火
seven, the first is clear water, the second fire, the third soap, the fourth willow catkins, the fifth pure ashes, the sixth ointment, and the seventh the inner garment. He used these seven to represent seven other things that cleanse and enhance a person by eliminating the delusion and filth of a poisoned mind.

The first of these seven is morality, which washes away excess just as clear water washes away dirt. Second is wisdom, which penetrates subject and object, just as fire warms water. Third is discrimination, which gets rid of evil practices, just as soap gets rid of grime. Fourth is honesty, which purges delusions, just as chewing willow catkins purifies the breath. Fifth is true faith, which resolves all doubts, just as rubbing pure ashes on the body prevents illnesses. Sixth is patience, which overcomes resistance and disgrace, just as ointment softens the skin. And seventh is shame, which redresses evil deeds, just as the inner garment covers up an ugly body. These seven represent the real meaning of the sutra. When he spoke this sutra, the Tathagata was talking to farsighted followers of the Mahayana, not to narrow-minded people of dim vision. It's not surprising that people nowadays don't understand.

The bathhouse is the body. When you light the fire of wisdom,
温浄戒湯沐浴身中，真如佛性受持七法，以自庄严，当尔比丘，聪明上智，皆悟圣意，如说修行功德成就，俱登圣果。今时众生，莫测其事，将世间水洗，质礙身自，谓依经非，误也，且冥如佛性，非是凡形，烦恼尘垢，本来无相。岂可将质礙水，洗无为身，事不相应，云何悟道若欲身得净者，当观此身本因，贪欲不净，所生臭秽，疥癞阑内，外充满若也，洗此身求于净者，犹如堯盡方，净以此验之，明知洗外，非佛说也。问经说言至心念佛，必得往生，西方净土，以此一门，即应成佛，何假观心，求于解脱，答夫念佛者，当须正念，义为正不了义为邪，正念必得往生，邪念云何，达彼佛
you warm the pure water of the precepts and bathe the true buddha-nature within you. By upholding these seven practices you add to your virtue. The monks of that age were perceptive. They understood the Buddha’s meaning. They followed his teaching, perfected their virtue, and tasted the fruit of buddhahood. But people nowadays can’t fathom these things. They use ordinary water to wash a physical body and think they’re following the sutra. But they’re mistaken.

Our true buddha-nature has no shape. And the dust of affliction has no form. How can people use ordinary water to wash an intangible body? It won’t work. When will they wake up? To clean such a body you have to behold it. Once impurities and filth arise from desire, they multiply until they cover you inside and out. But if you try to wash this body of yours, you’ll have to scrub until it’s nearly gone before it’s clean. From this you should realize that washing something external isn’t what the Buddha meant.

The sutras say that someone who wholeheartedly invokes the Buddha is sure to be reborn in the Western Paradise. Since this door leads to buddhahood, why seek liberation in beholding the mind?

If you’re going to invoke the Buddha, you have to do it right. Unless you understand what invoking means, you’ll do it wrong. And if you do it wrong, you’ll never go anywhere.
者覺也所謂覺察身心勿令起惡念者憶也所謂憶持

戒行不忘精進勤了如是義名為念故知念在於心不

在於言因筌求魚得魚忘筌因言求意得意忘言既稱

念佛之名須知念佛之道若心無實口誦空名三毒內

臻人我填聾將無明心不見佛徒爾費功且如誦之與

念義理懸殊在口曰誦在心曰念故知念從心起名為

覺行之門誦在口中即是音聲之相執相求理終無是

處故知過去諸聖所修皆非外誦唯只推心卽心是眾

善之源卽心為萬德之主涅槃常樂由息心生三界輪

迴亦從心起心是一世之門戶心是解脫之關津知門

戶者豈慮難成知關津者何憂不達窮見今時淺識唯
Buddha means awareness, the awareness of body and mind that prevents evil from arising in either. And to invoke means to call to mind, to call constantly to mind the rules of discipline and to follow them with all your might. This is what’s meant by invoking. Invoking has to do with thought and not with language. If you use a trap to catch fish, once you succeed you can forget the trap. And if you use language to find meaning, once you find it you can forget language.

To invoke the Buddha’s name you have to understand the dharma of invoking. If it’s not present in your mind, your mouth chants an empty name. As long as you’re troubled by the three poisons or by thoughts of yourself, your deluded mind will keep you from seeing the Buddha and you’ll only waste your effort. Chanting and invoking are worlds apart. Chanting is done with the mouth. Invoking is done with the mind. And because invoking comes from the mind, it’s called the door to awareness. Chanting is centered in the mouth and appears as sound. If you cling to appearances while searching for meaning, you won’t find a thing. Thus, sages of the past cultivated introspection and not speech.

This mind is the source of all virtues. And this mind is the chief of all powers. The eternal bliss of nirvana comes from the mind at rest. Rebirth in the three realms also comes from the mind. The mind is the door to every world and the mind is the ford to the other shore. Those who know where the door is don’t worry about reaching it. Those who know where the ford is don’t worry about crossing it.

The people I meet nowadays are superficial. They think of
知事相為公廣，費財寶多傷水陸，安營像塔，虞促人夫。

積木塚泥圖畫，塚傾心盡，力損己迷，未解懟懟。

曾覺，知見為則勤勤愛著說無相則兀兀如迷且貪。

現世之小慈，豈覺當來之大苦，此之修學徒自疲勞。

正歸邪詭言獲福但能攝心內照，覺觀外明絕三毒，永使勝亡，閉六賊，不令侵擾，自然恒沙功德種種莊嚴無數，法門一成就，超凡聖，目擊非遙悟在須臾何煩，皓首真門幽秘，寧可具陳略述觀心詳為，少分。

達磨大師破相論終。
merit as something that has form. They squander their wealth and butcher creatures of land and sea. They foolishly concern themselves with erecting statues and stupas, telling people to pile up lumber and bricks, to paint this blue and that green. They strain body and mind, injure themselves and mislead others. And they don’t know enough to be ashamed. How will they ever become enlightened? They see something tangible and instantly become attached. If you talk to them about formlessness, they sit there dumb and confused. Greedy for the small mercies of this world, they remain blind to the great suffering to come. Such disciples wear themselves out in vain. Turning from the true to the false, they talk about nothing but future blessings.

If you can simply concentrate your mind’s inner light and behold its outer illumination, you’ll dispel the three poisons and drive away the six thieves once and for all. And without effort you’ll gain possession of an infinite number of virtues, perfections, and doors to the truth. Seeing through the mundane and witnessing the sublime is less than an eye-blink away. Realization is now. Why worry about gray hair? But the true door is hidden and can’t be revealed. I have only touched upon beholding the mind.
The Chinese text used for this translation is a Ch’ing dynasty woodblock edition that incorporates corrections of obvious copyist errors in the standard edition of the continuation to the Ming dynasty Tripitaka. I’ve added several corrections of my own, based mostly on textual variants found in Tunhuang versions, for which see D. T. Suzuki’s Shoshitsu isho oyobi kaisetsu (Lost Works of Bodhidharma). An earlier English translation of the Outline of Practice (from the Transmission of the Lamp) appears in Suzuki’s Manual of Zen Buddhism. Also, in Zen Dawn J. C. Cleary has recently published translations based on Tunhuang editions of the Outline (from the Records of Masters and Students of the Lanka) and the Breakthrough Sermon (On Contemplating Mind).

1. **Path.** When Buddhism came to China, Tao was used to translate Dharma and Bodhi. This was partly because Buddhism was viewed as a foreign version of Taoism. In his “Bloodstream Sermon,” Bodhidharma says, “The path is zen.”

2. **Walls.** After he arrived in China, Bodhidharma spent nine years in meditation facing the rock wall of a cave near Shaolin Temple. Bodhidharma’s walls of emptiness connect all opposites, including self and other, mortal and sage.

3. **Four . . . practices.** These are a variation of the Four Noble Truths: all existence is marked by suffering; suffering has a cause; the cause can be brought to an end; and the way to bring it to an end is the Eightfold Noble Path of right views, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right devotion, right mindfulness, and right zen.

4. **Calamity . . . Prosperity.** Two goddesses, responsible for bad and good fortune, respectively. They appear in Chapter Twelve of the Nirvana Sutra.

5. **Three realms.** The Buddhist psychological equivalent of the Brahmanic cosmological triple world of bhur, bhuvah, and svar, or earth, atmosphere, and heaven. The Buddhist triple world includes kamadhatu, or the realm of desire—the hells, the four continents of the human and animal world, and the six heavens of pleasure; rupadhatu, or the realm of form—the four heavens of meditation; and arupad-
hatu, or the formless realm of pure spirit—the four empty, or immaterial, states. Together, the three realms constitute the limits of existence. In Chapter Three of the *Lotus Sutra* the three realms are represented by a burning house.

6. **Dharma.** The Sanskrit word *dharma* comes from *dhri*, meaning *to hold*, and refers to anything held to be real, whether in a provisional or in an ultimate sense. Hence, the word can mean *thing*, *teaching*, or *reality*.

7. **Six virtues.** The paramitas, or *means to the other shore*: charity, morality, patience, devotion, meditation, and wisdom. All six must be practiced with detachment from the concepts of actor, action, and beneficiary.

8. **Mind.** A verse from the *Avatamsaka Sutra* is paraphrased here: “The three realms are just one mind.” The sixth Zen patriarch, Hui-neng, distinguishes *mind* as the realm and *nature* as the lord.

9. **Buddhas.** Buddhism doesn’t limit itself to one buddha. It recognizes countless buddhas. After all, everyone has the buddha-nature. There’s a buddha in every world, just as there’s awareness in every thought. The only necessary qualification for buddhahood is complete awareness.

10. **Without . . . definitions.** The absence of definitions in the transmission of the Dharma is a touchstone of Zen Buddhism. It doesn’t necessarily mean without words but, rather, without restrictions as to the mode of transmission. A gesture is as good as a discourse.

11. **Kalpa.** The period from a world’s creation until its destruction; an aeon.

12. **This mind is the buddha.** This is Mahayana Buddhism in a nutshell. Once a monk asked Big Plum what Matsu taught him. Big Plum said, “This mind is the buddha.” The monk replied, “Nowadays Matsu teaches *That which isn’t the mind isn’t the buddha.*” To this Big Plum responded, “Let him have *That which isn’t the mind isn’t the buddha.* I’ll stick with *This mind is the buddha.*” When he heard this story, Matsu said, “The plum is ripe.” (Transmission of the Lamp, Chapter 7)

13. **Enlightenment.** Bodhi. The mind free of delusion is said to be full of light, like the moon when it’s no longer obscured by clouds. Instead of undergoing another rebirth, the enlightened person attains nirvana, because enlightenment puts an end to karma. The faculty of hearing
is more primitive, but sight is man's accustomed source of knowledge about reality; hence the use of visual metaphors. The sutras, though, also talk about worlds in which buddhas teach through the sense of smell.

14. **Nirvana.** Early Chinese translators tried some forty Chinese words before finally giving up and simply transliterating this Sanskrit word, which means *absence of breath.* It's also defined as *the only calm.* Most people equate it with death, but to Buddhists nirvana means the absence of the dialectic that breath represents. According to Nagarjuna, “That which is, when subject to karma, samsara, is, when no longer subject to karma, nirvana.” (Madhyamika Shastra, Chapter 25, Verse 9)

15. **Self-nature.** Svabhava. That which is of itself so. Self-nature depends on nothing, either causally, temporally, or spatially. Self-nature has no appearance. Its body is no body. It's not some sort of ego, and it's not some sort of substrate or characteristic that exists in or apart from phenomena. Self-nature is empty of all characteristics, including emptiness, and yet it defines reality.

16. **Invoke a buddha.** Invocation includes both visualization of a buddha and repetition of a buddha's name. The usual object of such devotion is Amitabha, the Buddha of the Infinite. Wholehearted invocation of Amitabha assures devotees of rebirth in his Western Paradise, where enlightenment is said to be far easier to attain than in this world.

17. **Sutra.** Meaning *string,* a sutra strings together the words of a buddha.

18. **Precepts.** The Buddhist practice of morality includes a number of prohibitions: usually 5 for laymen, nearly 250 for monks, and anywhere from 350 to 500 for nuns.

19. **See your nature.** Whether called *self-nature,* *buddha-nature,* or *dharma-nature,* our nature is our real body. It's also our false body. Our real body isn't subject to birth or death, appearance or disappearance, but our false body is in a state of constant change. Seeing our nature, our nature sees itself, because delusion and awareness aren't different. For an exposition of this in English, see D. T. Suzuki's Zen Doctrine of No Mind.

20. **Life and death.** Shakyamuni left home to find a way out of the endless round of life and death. Anyone who follows the Buddha must do the same. When it was time to transmit the robe and bowl of the Zen lineage, Hung-jen, the fifth Zen patriarch, called his disciples together
and told them, “Nothing is more important than life and death. But instead of looking for a way out of the Sea of Life and Death, you spend all your time looking for ways to earn merit. If you’re blind to your own nature, what good is merit? Use your wisdom, the prajna-nature of your own mind. All of you, go write me a poem.” (Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch, Chapter One)

21. Twelvefold Canon. The twelve divisions of the scriptures recognized by Mahayana Buddhism. These divisions, which were made to separate different subjects and literary forms, include sutras, sermons of the Buddha; geyas, verse repetitions of sutras; gathas, chants and poems; nidanas, historical narratives; jatakas, stories of previous buddhas; itivrittakas, stories of past lives of disciples; abhutadharma, miracles of the Buddha; avadana, allegories; upadesa, discussions of doctrine; udana, unsolicited statements of doctrine; vaipulya, extended discourses; and vyakarana, prophecies of enlightenment.

22. The Wheel of Birth and Death. The endless round of rebirth from which only buddhas escape.

23. Good Star. In Chapter Thirty-three of the Nirvana Sutra, Good Star is said to be one of Shakyamuni’s three sons. And, like his brother Rahula, he became a monk. Eventually, he was able to recite and explain the entire sacred literature of his time and thought he had attained nirvana. In fact, he had only reached the fourth dhyana heaven in the realm of form. And when the karmic support for such attainment ran out, he was transported bodily to the hell of endless suffering.

24. Sutras or shastras. Sutras are the discourses of buddhas. Shastras are the discourses of prominent disciples.

25. White from black. A reference to the attempt to see Buddhism as Confucianism or Taoism, sparked by Hui-lin’s essay on the subject written in 435, in which he called Confucianism and Buddhism equally true and in which he denied the operation of karma after death.

26. Devils. Buddhists, like the followers of other faiths, recognize a category of being whose sole purpose is to sidetrack would-be buddhas. These legions of devils are led by Mara, whom the Buddha defeated the night of his enlightenment.

27. Karma. The moral equivalent of the physical law of cause and effect, karma includes actions of the body, mouth, and mind. All such actions turn the Wheel of Rebirth and result in suffering. Even when an action is good, it still turns the Wheel. The goal of Buddhist practice
is to escape the Wheel, to put an end to karma, to act without acting, not to achieve a better rebirth.

28. **Skandhas.** Sanskrit for the constituents of mind or one’s mental body: form, sensation, perception, impulse, and consciousness.

29. **Samsara.** Sanskrit for *constant flow*, the round of mortality, the endless flux of birth and death.

30. **Tathagata.** A name for a buddha; the name by which a buddha refers to himself. A buddha is aware. A tathagata is a buddha’s manifestation in the world, his transformation body, as opposed to his reward body or his real body. A tathagata teaches the Dharma.

31. **Four elements.** The four constituents of all matter, including the material body: earth, water, fire, and air.

32. **Kashyapa.** Also called Mahakashyapa, or the Great Kashyapa. He was one of the Buddha’s foremost disciples and is credited with becoming the first Zen patriarch in India. When the Buddha held up a flower, Kashyapa smiled in response, and the transmission of the zen mind began.

33. **Bodhisattva.** The Mahayana ideal. The bodhisattva ties his own liberation to that of other beings, whereas the arhat, the Hinayana ideal, concerns himself with seeking his own salvation. Instead of shrinking the mind into nothingness, as the arhat does, the bodhisattva expands it to infinity. This is because he realizes that all beings have the same buddha-nature.

34. **Spirits, demons, or divine beings.** Spirits are disembodied beings. Demons include various gods of the sky (*devas*), the sea (*nagas*), and the earth (*yakshas*). Divine beings include Indra, lord of the thirty-three heavens, and Brahma, lord of creation.

35. **A buddha, a dharma, or a bodhisattva.** These three constitute the Buddhist Refuge, or Triple Jewel. A dharma is the teaching of a buddha. Those who follow such a teaching constitute the order of monks or, in the Mahayana tradition, bodhisattvas.

36. **Zen.** First used to transliterate *dhyana*, the Sanskrit term for meditation. Bodhidharma is credited with freeing zen from the meditation cushion, using the term instead in reference to the everyday, straightforward mind, the mind that sits without sitting and that acts without acting.

37. **Thousands of sutras and shastras.** A catalogue of the Chinese Buddhist Canon, or Tripitaka, made in the early sixth century lists 2,213 distinct works, about 1,600 of which were sutras. Many sutras have
been added to the Tripitaka since then, but even more have been lost. The present Canon includes 1,662 works.

38. **Body and mind.** The body of four elements and the mind of five aggregates designate the self generally, but Bodhidharma is referring to the buddha-self.

39. **Heaven and hell.** Buddhists recognize four heavens of form, which are divided into sixteen to eighteen heavens, and four of formlessness. At the opposite side of the Wheel are eight hot hells and eight cold hells, each of which has four adjacent hells. There are also a number of special hells, such as the hells of endless darkness and endless suffering.

40. **Fanatics.** Among the followers of various Buddhist and non-Buddhist religious sects, those most subject to denigration as fanatics were those who engaged in asceticism and self-torture or who followed the letter and not the spirit of the Dharma.

41. **Unexcelled, complete enlightenment.** Anuttara-samya-k-sambodhi. The goal of bodhisattvas. See the beginning of the *Diamond Sutra.*

42. **Shakya-muni.** Shakya was the Buddha’s clan name. Muni means saint. His family name was Gautama, and his personal name was Siddhartha. The exact dates given for him vary, but the consensus is from 557 to 487 B.C. or thereabouts.

43. **Ananda.** Shakya-muni’s brother-in-law. He was born the night of the Buddha’s Enlightenment. Twenty-five years later he entered the Order as the Buddha’s personal attendant. After the Buddha’s Nirvana, he repeated from memory the Buddha’s sermons at the First Council.

44. **Arhat.** To free oneself from rebirth is the goal of followers of the Hinayana, or Small Vehicle. But while an arhat is beyond passion, he’s also beyond compassion. He doesn’t realize that all mortals share the same nature and that there aren’t any buddhas unless everyone’s a buddha.

45. **Icchantikas.** A class of being concerned so exclusively with sensual gratification that religious belief is beyond them. They break the precepts and refuse to repent. An early Chinese translation of the *Nirvana Sutra* denied that icchantikas possessed the buddha-nature. Since the Buddhist prohibition against killing is intended to prevent killing anyone capable of buddhahood, killing icchantikas was, at least in theory, held to be blameless. A later translation of the *Nirvana Sutra,* however, rectified this notion, asserting that even icchantikas have the buddha-nature.

46. **Lower orders of existence.** Beasts, hungry ghosts, and sufferers in hell.
47. *Shave their heads.* When Shakyamuni left his father’s palace in the middle of the night to begin his search for enlightenment, he cut off his shoulder-length hair with his sword. The short hair that remained formed clockwise curls that never required cutting again. Later, members of the Buddhist Order began shaving their heads to distinguish themselves from other sects.

48. *Spiritual powers.* Buddhists recognize six such powers: the ability to see all forms; the ability to hear all sounds; the ability to know the thoughts of others; the ability to know the previous existences of oneself and others; the ability to be anywhere or do anything at will; and the ability to know the end of rebirth.

49. *Twenty-seven patriarchs.* Kashyapa was the first patriarch of the Zen lineage. Ananda was the second. Prajnatara was the twenty-seventh and Bodhidharma the twenty-eighth. Bodhidharma was also the first Zen patriarch in China.

50. *Imprint.* An imprint because transmission of the zen mind leaves a perfect likeness, which can always be checked against the real thing, and which takes as much time and makes as much sound as affixing a seal.

51. *Mahayana.* Maha means great, and yana means vehicle. The predominant form of Buddhism in Northern, Central, and East Asia. The Theravada (Teaching of the Elders) is the predominant form in South and Southeast Asia. The term Hinayana is also used to refer to the Theravada.

52. *Atoms.* The early Buddhist Sarvastivadins recognized subatomic particles called parama-anu which can only be known through meditation. Seven of these particles make up an atom, and seven atoms make up a molecule, which is perceptible only by the eyes of a bodhisattva. The Sarvastivadins claimed that a person’s body is made up of 84,000 such atoms (the number 84,000 was often used to mean countless).


54. *Six senses.* Sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and thought.

55. *Five aggregates.* The five skandhas, or constituents of mind: form, sensation, perception, impulse, and consciousness.

56. *Ten directions.* The eight points of the compass, plus the zenith and nadir.

57. *Arhats stay still.* The arhat achieves the fourth and final fruit of Hinayana Buddhists, freedom from passion, by cultivating stillness.
58. *Leaving home.* As Shakyamuni did to seek enlightenment. Hence, becoming a monk or nun.

59. *Place of enlightenment.* Bodhimandala. The center of every world, where all buddhas reach enlightenment. The term also refers to a Buddhist temple.

60. *Uninhabited place.* One suitable for spiritual cultivation.

61. *Middle Way.* The path that avoids realism and nihilism, existence and nonexistence.

62. *True vision.* The Buddha’s Eightfold Noble Path begins with true vision, which is intended to break through delusion or ignorance, the first of twelve links on the Chain of Karma: delusion, impulse, consciousness, name-and-form, sense organs, contact, sensation, desire, grasping, existence, birth, aging-and-death. The first two refer to the previous existence, the last two to the next.

63. *Samadhi.* The goal of meditation. Samadhi is Sanskrit for an undistracted mind, a snake in a bamboo tube.

64. *Five shades.* The skandhas or aggregates, the constituents of personality that overshadow the real self: form, sensation, perception, impulse, and consciousness.

65. *Beginning of nirvana.* Nirvana isn’t final until the body is left behind.

66. *Assurance of no rebirth.* The embodiment of nirvana.

67. *Buddha-land.* A realm transformed by the presence of a buddha from filth to purity: hence, a pure land. See the last section of Chapter One in the *Vimilakirti Sutra.*

68. *Raft.* The Buddha likens his teachings to a raft that can be used to cross the River of Endless Rebirth. But once it’s served its purpose, the raft is useless. It’s no longer a raft.

69. *Goddess . . . stable boy.* The goddess appears in Chapter Seven of the *Vimilakirti Sutra.* The stable boy may be a reference to Chandaka, Shakyamuni’s groom. If it is, I’m not familiar with the story.

70. *Twelve entrances.* The six organs and the six senses.

71. *Three releases.* Release from delusion, anger, and greed lies through the three doors to deliverance: no-self, no-form, and no-desire.

72. *Wutou and futzu.* An anesthetic is extracted from futzu, the secondary roots that grow from the base root of wutou (*Aconitum* or monkshood). The secondary roots don’t develop until the plant’s second year.

73. *Three bodies.* The *nirmanakaya* (Shakyamuni), the *sambhogakaya* (Amitabha), and the *dharmaakaya* (Vairocana).
The Great Enlightenment occurred in the Himalayas. The Buddha's Enlightenment occurred not in the Himalayas but in the ancient Indian state of Magadha, south of Nepal. In a previous existence, however, the Buddha lived in the Himalayas as an ascetic. Hence by linking together the Buddha's previous lives the claim is true.

A person can enlarge the Way. The Way can't enlarge a person. A statement by Confucius. (Analects, Chapter 15)

Perfect wisdom. This is a paraphrase of the opening line of the Heart Sutra, where the bodhisattva is Avalokitesvara and where perfect wisdom, or prajnaparamita, is no wisdom, because perfect wisdom is "gone, gone beyond, gone completely beyond" categories of space and time, being and nonbeing.

Pure and impure. For an extended discourse on these, see Ashvaghoosa's Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana, where pure and impure are called enlightenment and nonenlightenment.

Sutra of Ten Stages... Nirvana Sutra. When translations of these two sutras first appeared in the early fifth century, they had a profound effect on the development of Buddhism in China. Among their teachings are the universality of the buddha-nature and the eternal, joyous, personal, and pure nature of nirvana. Up until then, the doctrine of emptiness taught by the prajnaparamita sutras had dominated Chinese Buddhism. The Sutra of Ten Stages, which details the stages through which a bodhisattva passes on his way to buddhahood, is a version of a chapter by the same title in the Avatamsaka Sutra.

Six sense organs. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, and mind.

Six kinds of consciousness. The varieties of consciousness associated with sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and thought. The Lankavatara breaks thought into comprehension, discrimination, and (tathagata-) memory for a total of eight forms of consciousness.

Six states of existence. The basic varieties of existence through which beings move, whether thought after thought or life after life, until they attain enlightenment and escape from the wheel of suffering. Suffering on this wheel is relative. Gods in heaven lead mostly blissful lives, while the sufferers in hell go from pain to pain. Demons and men experience more suffering than gods but less than hungry ghosts and beasts.

True practice. Practice that leads directly to enlightenment, as opposed to practice that leads to another stage of practice. Here true practice refers to beholding the mind.
83. *Ten good deeds.* These include the avoidance of the ten evil deeds, namely, murder, theft, adultery, falsehood, slander, profanity, gossip, avarice, anger, and advocating false views.

84. *Five precepts.* These are for lay Buddhists. They are injunctions against murder, theft, adultery, falsehood, and intoxication.

85. *Three asankhya kalpas.* A universe is marked by three phases: creation, duration, and destruction. Each lasts countless (*asankhya*) kalpas. A fourth phase of emptiness between universes isn’t included here because it contains no hardships.

86. *Final age.* The first period of a buddha-age lasts 500 years, after which understanding of the correct doctrine begins to decline. The second period lasts 1,000 years, during which time understanding of the doctrine declines even further. The third and final period, the duration of which is indefinite, witnesses the eventual disappearance of a buddha’s message. Another version assigns 500 years to each of the three periods.

87. *Three sets of precepts.* There are five for ordinary lay Buddhists, eight for the more devout members of the laity, and ten for novice monks and nuns. The first five are injunctions against murder, theft, adultery, falsehood, and intoxication. To these five are added injunctions against bodily adornment (garlands, jewelry, and perfume), bodily comfort (soft beds), and overeating (eating after the noon meal). And to these eight are added injunctions against the enjoyment of entertainment and the possession of wealth. These three sets are summarized by the three vows. The vow to avoid evil is made by all believers. The vow to cultivate virtue is made by the more devout lay believers. And the vow to liberate all beings is made by all monks and nuns.

88. *Paramitas . . . means to the other shore.* The six paramitas begin with charity and proceed through morality and patience, devotion and meditation to wisdom. Likening the paramitas to a boat that ferries people to the other shore, Buddhists see charity as the emptiness without which a boat can’t float: morality as the keel, patience the hull, devotion the mast, meditation the sail, and wisdom the tiller.

89. *Milk . . . gruel.* After engaging in ascetic practices for a number of years to no avail, Shakyamuni broke his fast by drinking this milk-gruel offered by Nandabala, daughter of a cowherd chieftain. After drinking it, he sat down under a tree and resolved not to rise until he had attained enlightenment.
90. *Vairocana.* The Great Sun Buddha, who embodies the dharma-self or true body of the Buddha. As such, Vairocana is the central figure in the pantheon of five dhyani buddhas, which includes Akshobhya in the East, Ratnasambhava in the South, Amitabha in the West, and Amogasiddhi in the North.

91. *Six periods.* Morning, noon, afternoon, evening, midnight, and pre-dawn.

92. *Stupas.* A stupa is a mound of earth or any structure erected over the remains, relics, or scriptures of a buddha. Walking around stupas is done in a clockwise direction, with the right shoulder always pointed toward the stupa.

93. *Five kinds of . . . incense.* These correspond to the five attributes of a tathagata’s body.

94. *Dipamkara.* Shakyamuni met Dipamkara Buddha at the end of the second asankhya kalpa and offered him five blue lotuses. Dipamkara then predicted Shakyamuni’s future buddhahood. Thus Dipamkara appears whenever a buddha preaches the Dharma of the *Lotus Sutra.*

95. *Curl.* One of a buddha’s thirty-two auspicious signs is a curl between his brows that emits rays of light.

96. *Six attractions.* That to which the six senses become attached.

97. *Lord.* A translation of *bhagavan,* one of a buddha’s ten titles. The Chinese translation renders it *world-honored one.*

98. *Bathhouse Sutra.* Translated by An Shih-kao in the middle of the second century. This brief sutra recounts the merit gained from providing bathing facilities for monks.

99. *Inner garment.* One of the three regulation garments of a monk. The inner garment is worn to protect against desire. The seven-patch robe is worn to protect against anger. And the twenty-five-patch assembly robe is worn to protect against delusion.

100. *Western Paradise.* Also called the Pure Land. This land is presided over by Amitabha, one of the five dhyani buddhas and the one associated with the West. Wholehearted invocation of Amitabha assures the devotee of rebirth in his Pure Land, which is described as millions of miles away and not very far at all. Once reborn there, devotees have little trouble understanding the Dharma and attaining liberation.
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