



Preface

A Message of Congratulations

The defining characteristic of Korean Buddhism is its long tradition of Ganhwa Seon,¹ or “word-contemplation meditation,” a tradition that is rarely found in any other country in the world.

At present, every year about 2,000 monks practice this style of rigorous meditation, especially during the three-month long Summer and Winter retreats, at some one hundred Seon Halls around Korea. In the past, however, there were many difficult times in the tradition of Ganhwa Seon in our history, and it was the great Seon Master Gyeongheo (1846-1912) who overcame these crises and restored the foundation of Korean

¹ Seon is the Korean pronunciation of the character (禪), which in China is pronounced Chan, and in Japan, Zen. While these schools share a similar root, they have developed differently within each culture, and thus, we use the term Seon to represent the unique practice of the tradition in Korea.

in the tradition of the mind-to-mind meditation practice of the Linji Order. The Master established a number of meditation centers at monasteries and temples, such as Cheonjang Monastery and Sudeok Temple in South Chungcheong Province, Beomeo Monastery in Busan, Haein Monastery in South Gyeongsang Province, and Songgwang and Hwaeom Monasteries in Cheolla Province. He also promoted the tradition of Seon by cultivating countless disciples, among them, the Master's chief Dharma disciples, Mangong Wolmyeon, Hyewol, Suwol, and Hanam.

But, in fact, the Master was the teacher of countless Seon masters who contributed to the revival of Korean Buddhism in its modern history and who established the foundation of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism, the major Buddhist Order in Korea.

This collection of writings of the great Master was published based on the materials collected by Ven. Master Mangong in 1942, thirty years after Master's death. It includes dharma speeches, prefaces, the records of letters, epistles, brief life records of Masters, eulogiums, Seon poems, songs, and brief biographies of the great Master by his disciples, Hanam and Manhae Han Yong-un.

It is truly regrettable that we've had to wait so long to have the

Master's collected writings translated into English. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the translator and editors, and I also sincerely wish that the great writings of the Master be read far and wide, encouraging a true understanding of Korean Buddhism, which is, as I noted above, indeed a very unique form within the larger religious tradition of Buddhism.

March 2551 (2007)
Ven. Jikwan
The Chief Executive of Administration
The Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism



Foreword

When I was working at Bulgyo-sa Buddhist Publications Ltd. seven years ago, my respectful Dharma friend Mangong showed me a bunch of papers and said, "This is the collection of writings written by Preceptor Gyeongheo that has been kept by numerous individuals. I fear that there might be some erroneous and missing words. I want them corrected and I also want you to write a foreword and have this collection published."

I could not refuse his proposal. I read it several times and immediately realized that this manuscript was not a mere collection of prose and poetry but a primary collection of very profound Dharma talks. These talks sometimes took place in a tavern or at a market place, yet they are never vulgar. Gyeongheo wrote some of these essays while in the remote mountains during a frigid winter storm, yet none of them are isolated from our mundane world.

His writings are powerful and without any hindrance, yet not forced. Every sentence and phrase is full of Seon, steeped in the Dharma, and resonant of truth. As varied as his topics may be, all his writings and poetry are truly singular and unique. The purpose of the younger generation publishing them is to transmit not the words, but the teachings of truth.

I really wanted his writings to be known to the world without delay, but fellow practitioners and elders were afraid that more of his writings would emerge, especially those from the late years of his seclusion. Thus, the general opinion was to first locate all of these in order to make the collection more complete for publication.

This compilation effort was achieved through the help of the young scholars Kim Yeong-un, Yun Deung-am, and others, who collected the writings through inquiries among the residents of Gapsan and Ganggye, in the northern part of the peninsula, and Manchuria where the Preceptor had spent the last years of his seclusion. Finally, it seemed that we had a complete collection of his works, but as we could not further investigate the exact dates of the writings, we decided to edit the compilation as it was.

I understand that Master Gyeongheo did not major in the letters, but even if there are some flaws in his style and refinement within his long passages, they are but tiny blemishes when seen in contrast to the entirety of his work. They are but a wisp of cloud in a clear blue sky.

The mystical cadence within the essence of Seon resounds distinctly in his calligraphic writings and this should be a good example to the younger generation. I really wanted to meet him when he was alive so that I could have a drink with him, and then strike down all the Buddhas of the three ages, the past, present, and future, with great admonition. Yet fortune did not allow me to perform such a feat and he suddenly left us.

It has been decades since he entered Nirvana. His writings remind me of the grief of the transient world.

September 2, 1942
Han Yong-un²

² Bhikku Manhae, the pen name of Han Yong-un, a poet as well as a monk, was one of the chief signatories of Korea's Declaration of Independence, on March 1, 1919. His best-known writings are his poem "The Silence of Love" and "The Reformation of Korean Buddhism."



Objective of the Publication of *The Collected Writings of Gyeongheo*

It is widely acknowledged that Seon Master Gyeongheo was responsible for the revival and enhancement of the Seon Buddhist tradition in modern Korea. In addition, there is no one who denies his deep understanding of the doctrine of Seon Buddhism or his great writing. His piquant style sometimes becomes a Dharma talk, sometimes poetry, and sometimes a treatise, and they are all great in number.

Yet, few people cared to record or collect them, and only a few of them are known. It is feared that they will all be lost as time passes by. Of course, there is in fact already an overabundance of Dharma talks and masterful dialogues on truth, and we might not really need yet another cart load of Master Gyeongheo's writings. Yet I think there is no Korean

Sunim³ who is not indebted to the great Seon Master. Therefore, instead of erecting a monument marking his remains or a stele detailing his virtuous deeds, we agreed to collect the writings of the Master and publish them posthumously to distribute among his fellow monks. We undertake this effort entirely through our own hands, eschewing the common practice of relying on the financial aid of devotees

We sincerely wish everyone examines our proposition and endorses the project. We also implore all practitioners who are now in the summer retreat to join our project and contribute according to their means, regardless of the amount of the contribution.

P.S.: The set amount for contributions is as follows: Five won or more for each Seon Hall, five *jeon* or more for each individual. All contributions should be sent to the Central Seon Monastery, 40 Anguk-dong, Seoul, by the end of July of this year.

Enclosed is the form of the list of contributors. Please write down the names and other information of the contributors in detail.

³ Sunim (스님) is the standard title for ordained Buddhist monks and nuns.

June 1942

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The Collected Writings of Gyeongheo

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I. Dharma Speeches



Cry of a Mud-Ox

The first thing a practitioner should remember is
How fast this fleeting life goes by
And how grave is the matter of birth and death.

An old master said,
"It is hard to preserve tomorrow what I am today."
Hence one should always keep in mind
Not to be idle and to maintain quietude
Without meddling in worldly affairs.

If the mind and the objective realms are disturbed
By their interaction, and time is wasted as if a furious bush fire,
They not only hamper meditation practice
But increase bad karmic consequences as well.

The most important thing is to maintain the quietude of mind
By keeping the mind from illusion
And preserving the purity of the mind of wisdom.

Everything arises from the mind.

One will be born in Heaven if one performs good actions,
And would fall into Hell if one performs bad actions.
One would be born a fierce animal if one is violent,
One would be born an earthworm or an insect if one is ignorant,
And one would be born a butterfly if one is light-heeled.

Hence an old master said,
"The difference of thinking decides the myriad outcomes."

If one can keep the mind like pure empty space
By emptying one's mind
Free from every delusion and disturbance,
There would be no room for the cycle of birth and death,
No room for either wisdom or enlightenment,
No room for good or bad,
No room for bad karmic actions arising from grasping.
If one can maintain purity from the top of the head

To the bottom of the sole,
One would not be dragged around by a sluggish life,
One would not be hampered by birth and death,
One would not even be obsessed with
Thoughts about the Buddha and Patriarchs.

Moreover, one would be able to embrace the whole universe
Or enter into a tiny particle of dust,
And see no difference between Buddha and an ordinary being.

There would also be no differentiation between small and large,
No differentiation between round and square,
No differentiation between light and dark,
Free from any restriction and manipulation.

Whosoever strives to seek the sublime teaching
Should always reflect upon oneself
Without even the thought of seeking truth.
Then, all of a sudden, one will realize the original self-nature
In the perfect voidness of truth as it really is
Where nothing is lacking or exceeding.
It is like an illumination of countless lights of the sun and the moon

Reaching the ten directions of the universe,
Or the furious sounds of the storms of the sea,
Without any designed or intentional efforts.
All things are natural
Yet they are too close to our everyday lives
For us to see and realize them.

Whosoever aspires to seek the sublime truth
Should delve deep into one's self-nature
With all one's heart without negligence.
When one's effort ripens,
The true nature of things will reveal itself.

Seon Master Taego says,
"One hardly raised the bow when the arrow pierced the rock,"
And Seon Master Cheongheo also says,
"It's like a mosquito's trying to bite the back of an iron bull,
Yet plunging right into the animal with its whole body."
These fabulous stories should be the guidelines
For *hwadu*⁴ meditation practitioners.

⁴ *Hwadu* (話頭) are puzzling or baffling questions or statements used by Seon Buddhist masters to provoke their disciples to renounce rational methods for achieving ultimate enlightenment.

Let us examine the daily life of a Bodhisattva:
There is nothing to be found in the empty mind,
Yet they are full of generous charities
In the empty roots of six senses,
And such purity without defilement is the precept,
Such tender emptiness, tolerance,
Such innate brightness without dark shadow is exertion,
And such bright serenity, the meditation.

Cutting off ignorance is none other than
To observe clearly the emptiness of things
Without disturbance of the mind of discriminating forms.

Wisdom without obstacle is to follow the course of nature,
About which Bodhidharma says,
"So long as the mind is concerned, truth governs the action."
Hence what one needs is to take good care of the root,
Without complaining of the state of the leaves and branches.
So too is enlightenment.
If one wishes to attain Buddhahood,
One should not worry about
Not having supernatural powers or serenity.

People these days do not practice meditation
As true sages and practitioners should.
The result is a man of ignorance and lack of insight
Whose sheep are wandering at the junction of the road.
He is also like a dreaming and drunken man.
What a pity and waste of time it is.

To quote Chan Master Dongshan:⁵
"The most miserable man is the one
Who is wearing a false Dharma robe."

If one heads in the wrong direction at the start of a long journey,
There is no meaning, no matter how far one gets.
The farther one gets,
The farther one would be from one's destination.
Chan Master Guifeng⁶ offered this admonition:
"We must ascertain our resolution and manner
Before starting our practice."

⁵ Chinese Chan Master Dongshan Liangjie (洞山良价) (807-869 CE), the founder of the Caodong school (曹洞宗) of Chinese Chan Buddhism.

⁶ Chinese Chan Master Guifeng Zongmi (宗密圭峰) (780-841 CE), a Tang dynasty scholar-monk installed as the fifth patriarch of the Huayan school.

It requires many steps and preparations, in addition to great effort,
To build even a small cottage.
Imagine then the construction of great enlightenment hall.
Without the proper steps and preparations
No success will be guaranteed.
Even in the smallest project, do not hesitate to ask,
If you do not know the right way.
If someone does not have the right answer,
For the success of your enterprise, ask another.

I saw few people who are careful
In their preparation for the study of sublime truth.
It is truly deplorable to see such people.
If one wishes to study the impermanence of things
To attain complete enlightenment,
One should at once set out to find a great master.



The Story of a Particle of Dust

If you say it is right,
It is like putting the head upon the head;
If you say it is not right,
It is like wishing to live by cutting off one's own head.
If you were in this situation, what would you do?

An old master said,
"Break through the problem or doubt that no words could assail,
Then everything will be bright and clear
Without a cloud of doubt above your head."
This is what we call "a non-sense of non-doing."

An old master offered another verse,
"A pine tree one thousand feet high with not a tiny branch.

What is the use of a branch anyways?"

Another verse,

"A picture in the bottle even before the beginning of the universe,
And the light reflected in the eyes of the King of Wondrous Sound."
They sound great,
But they are but menacing moles and a sixth finger.

Master Yangshan commented,

"Alas! He has fallen into a secondary level,
Even though he has attained a glimpse of enlightenment."
He has accomplished only half of the job.

Master Xiushan Zhu commented,

"It is wonderful to know something,
But I will approve of you
Only when you reach the realm of no-knowledge."

Master Dahui⁷ said,

"It is like countless alleys full of flowers

⁷ Dahui Zonggao (大慧宗杲) (1089-1163 CE), a Chinese monk who popularized the use of *hwadu* and was very influential to both Korean Seon and Japanese Zen.

And music coming from all directions."

Now, who dares open their mouth?

If there is anyone who can dare, step forth and tell me.

If anyone dares, say,

"It is like ringing a bell with a stuffed ear

And hiding the body with the shadow showing."

Then I would say,

"Where did you get such wise ideas?

Tell me whether they are right or wrong."

There is a blue cliff high and grand,

There is a bush full of pine and cypress trees,

There is a running creek hastening to the sea,

There is a batch of clouds in the sky,

There is a melody of all kinds of singing birds,

There is a field stretched out far and wide,

There is a great sea pounding with great waves,

There is a great display of spectacles,

And then there are the changing seasons of the year.

Now, tell me, "Where is the Buddha-Dharma?"

The Sutra says, "The Three Spheres of Life,
(The world of material qualities,
The world of sensuous desires,
The world of formlessness of pure spirit),
Are but a thought."

An old master said,
"True mind reveals itself
In the swaying bough by the wind,
In the reflection of the moon in the water,
And in the colorful flower and the green bamboo stalk."

He goes on to say, "Everything is the true meaning
Of the mind of the Patriarchs' as it clearly manifests."
Then tell me, what is the true mind
That reveals its bright and sublime nature and
The true meaning of the mind of the Patriarchs?

If there were no Buddha-Dharma,
How could Buddha deceive the people?
If he is not deceiving the people,
Then how could we understand it?

An old master said,
"One should not manipulate things,
But one should also not do nothing.
I will destroy the yellow pavilion in a strike
And turn the land of Aengmu upside down under my feet.

When vigor is raised, increase it all the more,
When there is no fun, that is fun."
Yet they are like dumping bread in soup;
Great effort, but no merit at all.

A monk asked, "What is the meaning of not changing?"
An old monk replied,
"The sun rises in the East and sets in the West."

When another monk asked the same question,
The old monk used his hands to show them how water flows,
And in that instant, the two monks awakened.
Now, tell me what they have awakened to.

It is a great mistake.
It is like refusing the sweet peach and persimmon

And then going to the mountain to take the sour fruit.

What is the solution?

Now, listen carefully.

The old monk took a deep breath and then said,

"Alas! The poor old monk misled the greenhorns.

It might take them thirty years to learn the truth. Tut, tut!"



To Master Deungam

Buddha preached the great discourse
On the Five Basic Precepts and Ten Virtues
For the people to be born in the human and heavenly realms;
Preached the Four Noble Truths for the people
To attain the stage of Arhat;
Preached Twelve Links of Interdependent Origination
For the people to attain
The vehicle of the solitary awakening;
Preached the Four Great Vows and Six Paramitas⁸
For the people to perfect the way of the Bodhisattva.
Buddha also preached to the Bodhisattvas

⁸ These are the six skills to be perfected by those on the bodhisattva path: generosity, precepts, patience, zeal, meditation, and wisdom.

Who, by means of expedience, have performed
The Four Great Vows and Six Paramitas for eons,
Who have attained the stages of Ten Kinds of Reliance,
Ten Abodes of Understanding,
Ten Actions of Practice,
Ten Kinds of Dedication and Transference of
One's Merit for the Others' Benefit,
Yet they still have not attained complete enlightenment,
By doubting the true nature of "conditioned things,"
And they do not know what to do when they hear about
The law of formless form.

They always retain the insight of seeking the Buddha,
But, as they have not yet cut off the roots
Of defilement and old habit,
They have to rely on the nobility and teachings of Buddha
To subjugate them.

For instance, it is like the one
Who, well versed in mantra, could subjugate
The fierce animals and snakes to protect the people,
Yet could not remove their venom.

It is also like a person who still has some doubts
About the Buddha-Dharma hanging in his throat.
If so, he should visit a good Master for instruction,
One who will immediately enable him to attain
The Ten Stages of Enlightenment.
But if he neglects to visit a good Master
And remains in the dark,
He will surely fall into evil ways.

A quotation from the National Preceptor Bojo:
"All beginners must first learn what right causal condition is.
However, one should be careful to understand that
The Five Basic Precepts,
The Ten Virtues,
The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination,
And the Six Paramitas are not right causal conditions.

One must realize that the right causal conditions are
To believe that the mind is Buddha
And incalculable eons are but emptiness
Arising from the mind."

It has long since passed since the sages departed,
Resulting in the break of the relationship between
Masters and friends
And the exhaustion of the main spring of wisdom.

These are the main reasons why
So many practitioners wander in delusion
And fall over the obstacles of the empty forms.

Their habitual method of expedience and the mediocre way
Also prevent the practice of the Four Noble Truths
And the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination,
Let alone the development of right causal conditions.

What is the mediocre way?
It is the half way to the ultimate truth.
What is the habitual method of expedience?
It is saving a sister-in-law from drowning by offering only a hand.

These ways of practice are far from the way
To the ultimate realm of truth,
And a wise one will eventually come to realize that

They are not the right ways to follow.

Chan Master Shou says,

"Buddha preached One Vehicle to the practitioner

Who is seeking the Great Way,

And preached Six Paramitas, artful liberative techniques,

And Six States of Existence to the practitioner

Who is seeking the small way of practice."

If they were nothing more than

The mediocre ways of expedience,

Then there would be no use talking about

The Five Basic Precepts,

Ten Virtuous Conducts, the Four Noble Truths,

And the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination.

As an expedience,

Buddha preached the sublime way of prayer

To deliver sentient beings,

But they misunderstood the essence of the prayer

And lost its true potency.

Buddha depicts the grandeur of the Pure Land
In the Amitabha Buddha Sutra
Then preaches the way to be born in the Land of Bliss:
"If the concentration of one's mind is undisturbed,
For a few days or for a week,
One will be born in the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha."

Now in the Sixteen Contemplations Sutra,
Buddha shows the way to contemplate a Buddha statue
In order to attain enlightenment:
"If one concentrates one's mind on a point
Bright and clear for a certain length of time,
One would experience serenity and attain infinite life."

Three groups of rebirth discoursed in the Sutras
Are all realized through enlightened mind.
What then is the enlightened mind?
It is none other than the pure nature of everyday mind.
If one can cultivate sublime everyday mind,
Or attain samadhi through contemplation of a Buddha statue,
Or attain undisturbed concentration of the mind,
There is no easier way to be born in the Pure Land.

This is what the Chan Master Guifeng meant when he said,
"Even when one wishes to be born in the Pure Land
Through chanting the names of Buddha,
One must also practice either the Sixteen Contemplation Meditations,
The Buddha-chanting samadhi,
Or the Pratyutpanna-samadhi
(Seven or Ninety Days of Concentration of the Mind)."

Thus, concentration of the mind is an entirely different thing
From the mere wish of rebirth in the Pure Land
Through reciting the names of Buddha.

All the new and old translations of the Sutras and treatises say,
"Even the Bodhisattvas
Who have attained the higher stages of Ten Grounds
Could only have a glimpse of Sambhogakaya
Or the Body of Bliss,"
Then there is no doubt about the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha
Being the Pure Land of the Body of Bliss.

If even the Bodhisattva of the Ten Grounds
Could only have a glimpse of the Body of Bliss,

How could an ordinary being with defilements
Imagine to attain complete liberation from birth and death
By chanting the names of Buddha with a distracted mind?

If one could attain complete liberation from life and death
By merely chanting the names of Buddha,
What is the use of diligently practicing the Sixteen Meditation Samadhi?
Such practice is against the teachings of Buddha and will never succeed.

There is an old saying that,
"Planting a tree and building a ship out of wood
Belongs to self exertion;
Relying on others' endeavors is
Lending the ship to cross the sea."

There is also a saying,
"The difference between fast and slow,
Difficult and easy, lies in the difference in the effort."

These expedient teachings could also be taken
As excuses for improper instructions
Which are against the true teachings of Buddha,

Leading sentient beings in the wrong way.

This is cause for an apology.

Originally, there was never a root of the tree,

Then what is the need of planting the seed?

There was never a bottom of the ship,

Then what is the need of building it?

There never was any want of function or principle

In the embracing of the universe;

The only problem is the ignorance of the people

Still dreaming the dream of delusion.

There are similar and dissimilar metaphors

In the *Inmyeong-non*:

"Buddha nature is like empty space" is the former case,

And "It is like a legion of troops and a thicket of trees"

Is the latter case.

We can speak of similar cases in different ways:

If "someone helps people in hunger and dire need

With one's own money and property," it is "self power (自力)."

If "someone helps people with the property of others,"
It is "other power (他力)."

None of these are against the teachings of Buddha,
And the Sutra says,
"One begs around not knowing of the precious stones
That are in one's own underwear."

There is no need to explain the self-evident difference
Between slow and fast.
But if one's mind is undisturbed even for a few days,
Its effect would be the same as that of a week.

If a sudden insight remains bright and clear
For a long period of time,
It would have the same effect
Of the Sixteen Contemplation Meditation.
So this is the initiation of awakening mind.

Thus, if the right instruction is applied
To the intensive practice of the Door of the Patriarchs,
There would be no one who would not awaken

To attain Buddhahood.

If one can stay awake in equanimity during the practice
Of *hwadu* or word contemplation meditation,
Without disturbance of the mind,
One would surely attain enlightenment.

So would the Buddha prayer lead to rebirth
In the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha
If one's concentration of the mind is undisturbed.

Thus, the essence of the matter is
The equanimity of undisturbed concentration of mind,
Not the way of practice.

If undisturbed concentration of the mind is "other power,"
Is checking the awakened mind of equanimity not the
"Other power" as well?

Conversely, if checking the awakened mind of equanimity
Is "self power,"
Is not undisturbed concentration of the mind

"Self power" as well?

If so, which is slow or fast, difficult or easy—

Undisturbed concentration of the mind

Or checking the awakened mind of equanimity?

If an ordinary being who is entangled with defilements

Could attain liberation from birth and death in an instant,

While even the Bodhisattva who has achieved

Above the stage of the Ten Grounds

Could only have a glimpse of the Pure Land

Of Sambhogakaya or the Body of Bliss,

That merit and virtue must surely be the reliance

On the undisturbed concentration of the mind

Because, if it were not for the undisturbed concentration of the mind,

How could it be possible?

Usually if appearance is neat and tidy, so is its shadow;

If the sound is loud, so is its echo;

If one's present life is virtuous,

One would be born in the heavenly realm;

If one's present life is evil,

One would surely fall into the realm of the hungry ghosts and Hell;
If one's life is pure and undefiled, it is an irrefutable law that
One would surely attain liberation from birth and death
And be born in the Buddha-land.

If this were not true, how then could a shadow be straight
When its form is crooked;
And an echo great when the sound is feeble?
How can one expect the leaves and branches to be lively
Without cultivating the root?
How can one expect for a building to stand firm
Without constructing a strong foundation?
Only a foolish man would engage in such ideas.

The great teacher Cheongheo strongly recommended
The rebirth in the Pure Land by
Either "self" or "other power,"
But he never mentioned liberation from birth and death
Through distracted mind.

A quotation from the Sutra:
"Buddha sees the people fallen into the sea of suffering

Just as a mother sees her child jumping into a fire
Without knowing the danger."

Hence it is entirely nonsense to say that
One would be saved if one only repeats the names of Buddha,
And would not be saved if one does not do the same.

How many people have been misled
By the metaphors of planting the tree
And lending the boat to cross over to the other shore?
It is truly deplorable that
So many practitioners of today neglect
Visiting the masters for instruction to cultivate
Their insight to seek the truth.

Instead, they either rely on "other powers,"
Or call the names of Buddha for their deliverance,
Not knowing that these are surely the paths to the devils.
I have much evidence to prove such instances.
It is truly deplorable to witness many novices of
Great resolution falling into the hands of devils.

A Patriarch says,

"Thinking means to retain in the mind without forgetting."

He goes on to say,

"Buddha prayer without thinking is not a true Buddha prayer."

He goes on to say again,

"The pure mind in one's reflection is the right way."

He continues,

"It is far better to keep one's original pure mind

Than to think about all the Buddhas in the ten directions.

If I deceive you, I would surely fall into eighteen Hells,

And if you do not trust me, you would be eaten by tigers

Every time you are born again.

Keep in mind that these are not fabulous stories."

When Bodhidharma came to the East to preach

The incomparable supreme teaching,

He did not teach his students to study Sutras,

Or chant a Buddha prayer,

Or memorize a mantra,

Or bow to the Buddha or to any deity,

Or sit tight without lying down,

Or eat only one meal a day,
Or teach anything about dwelling in tranquility
Or in enlightenment,
Or about keeping or breaking the precepts,
Or about a monk or a lay person, a male or a female,
Or about seeing the self-nature to attain the Buddhahood.
Hence if anyone studies Sutras or practices
Non-Buddhist ways, he deserves to be hanged.

He did not mention anything about the karmic killing of Candala
When he attained enlightenment and became a Buddha
Because he was exceptional
And would not be hindered by karmic actions.

When a lay person attained enlightenment and became a Buddha,
He did not mention anything about lustful desire
Because once awakened,
One would not be hindered by the residue of old habits.

Master Hongzhou says,
"What we call good is its mind,
Hence mind cannot be cultivated by mind;

What we call evil is also its mind,
Hence mind cannot be cut off by mind."

The Chan Master Niutou also says,
"As mind has no other mind,
There are no cravings and lustful desires to cut off;
There are eighty-one ways for the good Master to cultivate
Besides the Buddha-ways and precept-ways
To avoid killing, stealing, carnality, and taking intoxicants,
Yet for the awakened, there is nothing to be hindered."

This is what Chan Master Guishan means when he said,
"Just take good care of your clear eyes
And forget about your actions."
Yet this wayward teaching seems quite inscrutable
For the practitioners of Three Vehicles.

In the old days,
When Seon masters violated the precepts of the Small Vehicle,
They criticized the masters,
But it is like a tiny insect trying to stop the wheel of the cart
Or a little bird laughing at the great bird.

It is not even worth mentioning.

There are precepts for Hinayana and Mahayana,
Ultimate principle and relative phenomena,
Action and non-action.

The precept received from the Master
When one sets the mind toward achieving enlightenment
Is called the precept for action.

On the other hand,
Accepting the immutability of things
And the immoveable permanence of the Dharma,
To abide in the reality of things,
Is called the precept for non-action.

There are ten grave precepts
And forty-eight light precepts,
And they are all in the *Brahamajala Sutra*, also known as the
Sutra of the Net of Brahman.

Craving is the Great Way, and so is anger.

Thus, all Buddha's teachings are
In the three modes of teachings,
The mind, Buddha, and sentient beings,
Which should be spread far and wide.

Observing and violating the precepts are not two but one,
Which is called the absolute precept,
Because there is no actuality in the precept.

The preface of the *Bodhisattva-silla*,
The rules of discipline for a Bodhisattva, states that,
"It is the essence of the Great Vehicle
To save the world and to be beneficial to all living beings,
Which differentiates itself from the Small Vehicle
Which is more strict in the observation of the law.
Lady Mallika took drinking as her sole precept,
And Great King Xianyu's foremost precept was
To tender his wealth and charities to the people.
Then what is the meaning of restricting
The borders of the Dharma world?"

Dharmaraksha also writes in his *Conferring the Bodhisattva Vinaya*,

"People tend to forget precepts for two main reasons.

One is surrendering the resolution,

And the other is the augmentation of evil mind.

The augmentation of evil mind means

Claiming a false attainment of awakening, and

Asserting the emptiness of self and Dharma.

In sum, the precept of the Great Vehicle is

The firm resolution to keep the precepts at the axis

Of one's own life, forsaking the above two false views."

Somewhere in the precepts of the Small Vehicle, it says,

"It is committing a crime

If, under the big timber and the rock, one

Breaks the tree and digs the earth to save one's life."

People today do not know the restricted conditions

Of the precepts of the Small Vehicle,

Then how do they know the opening and obstructing ways

Of the precepts of the Great Vehicle?

How do they know how to set up and abandon the precepts

And perceive the precept of non-action?

Yet they believe that they are keeping the precepts of Buddha

While, in truth, they merely follow delusions.

Bodhidharma said,

"The mode of contemplation embraces all actions."

An old master also said,

"If mind is empty without hindrance,

It is true charity;

If mind is pure without defilement,

It is keeping the precepts;

If mind is peaceful without dispute,

It is tolerance;

If there is no discrimination in the mind of sublime serenity,

It is energetic exertion;

If it is wide open beyond serenity and clamor,

It is meditation;

And true wisdom is none other than

Supreme illumination beyond wisdom and ignorance."

He goes on to say,

"Never claim anything to be absolutely right

Nor anything to be absolutely wrong."

Rejecting the wrong and approving the right,
And accepting this and refusing that
Are none other than bounding oneself with iron chains.
The awakened one never claims anything to be right
Nor anything to be wrong.

Bodhidharma said,
"Benevolence, justice, courtesy, wisdom, and fidelity
Are called the realms of confinement;
So are the principles of Hinayana and Mahayana;
So are birth, death and Nirvana.

Hence, when one does not arouse the mind of an ordinary being,
When one does not arouse the mind of a Shravaka,
When one does not arouse the mind of a Bodhisattva,
When one does not arouse the mind of a Buddha,
One will be free from confinement."

He also said,
"Even when one is in Hell for one's sins,

One would attain enlightenment

If one could only realize one's own Dharma King."

He said again,

"Enlightenment can be attained in an instant,

Why then trouble oneself for an entire life?"

The Sixth Patriarch Huineng⁹ said,

"If forethought is deluded, one is a sentient being,

If afterthought is awakened, one is a Buddha."

An old master said,

"A dragon may change its bones,

But it cannot change its scales;

And ordinary beings may become Buddhas,

But they cannot change their faces."

As these Dharma speeches are so illuminating and priceless,

Concentration of the mind

And the sublime meanings of these words

⁹ Huineng (慧能) (638-713 CE), is one of the most important figures in the history of the Chan/Seon/Zen lineage. The *Platform Sutra* attributed to him is a key text in the East Asian Buddhist tradition.

Abide in one's mind forevermore.

An old master said,

"Even if one does not believe or understand

The teachings of the One Vehicle,

Having a mere causal relation to attain Buddhahood

Is far better than the bliss of human and heavenly beings.

Then how blissful it would be

If one takes them to one's heart, studies, and understands them?"

How then it is possible for one to abandon

The supreme way of study and seek any other way?

When a monk asked Master Zhaozhou,¹⁰

"Does a dog have Buddha-nature,"

Master Zhaozhou's answer was 'Mu (No).'

Everyone understands that Buddha said

Every living being, even a tiny bug, has Buddha-nature.

Then what is the meaning of Master Zhaozhou's "No?"

Whatever one does,

¹⁰ Zhaozhou (趙州) (778-897 CE), was a Chan monk considered to be one of the greatest masters of the Tang era and whose teachings are common in *gongan* collections.

Whether putting on clothes, eating, urinating,
Serving a master or teaching others,
Studying Sutras, or receiving guests and seeing them off,
Sitting or lying down, whenever and wherever one is;

One should reflect upon the illuminating light of truth,
Take up a *hwadu* whether one is coming or going,
Doubt, whether one is coming or going,
Check, contemplate, cultivate, and then cultivate again,
And then focus every sort of conflict
And the discriminating mind upon the word 'Mu'--nothing.

Thus, if one studies day and night for months and years,
One would surely attain enlightenment.
But one should also remember that
The hungry stomach cannot be filled
With one spoonful of rice,
And it takes stacks of paper to master the skill of writing.
But it is also true that constant and steady effort
Will make things easier for one to attain truth.

When an old master said,

"Practice meditation as a cat catches a mouse,"

He meant to steady one's mind;

And when he said,

"Practice meditation as a hen hatches its eggs,"

He meant to sit without stopping.

Maintaining a *hwadu* is like the sail fording a head wind.

Sometimes it is calm but callous and lacking any mirth,

Sometimes it is stuffy and seething,

But it is our duty to endure all these.

The secret way of maintaining a *hwadu* is

To concentrate one's mind,

But not to be too hasty or to be too lax,

To stay awake and check one's mind,

To be attentive with a steady breath,

To take food, but not too much or too little,

To have keen eyes and a straight back.

Life is like a fleeting shadow

Seen from the chasm of the window;

It is like a dew drop on the tip of the blade of grass;

It is like a candle light before the wind.

No matter how hard one struggles with fine tricks,
The end of life is a handful of bones.

To think of life as such, futile and fleeting fast,
Urgent is the matter of birth and death,
Like a burning fire on one's forehead.

We do not know where we are from,
Nor do we know where to return with our decomposing body,
Burdened with heavy karmic retributions.

The Four Kinds of Birth and the Six Realms of Existence
Arise from the passion of life.
Isn't it frightful?

How could we cope with the karmic effect of birth and death
If it were not for the right and proper meditation?
Then one should not be idle in one's practice.

It is the guidance of the Buddha and the Patriarchs
Where there could be neither deceit nor waste of a single word.
For my gratitude for the teachings I have received,

I dared to express these foolish thoughts of mine.

Since I am a slothful sort,

I just wished to express my opinion briefly,

Though there seemed no end to it.

Without due regard to lofty words or style,

This is the discourse I gave to Elder Deungam.



Seon Dialogue

The Seon dialogue from *Chanyao (The Essence of Seon)*:

Student: "What is the right way to practice

And the right way to attain enlightenment?"

Master: "When clouds gather in the mountain in the South,

Rain falls in the mountain in the North."

Student: "What does that mean?"

Master: "The measuring worm rolls once to progress an inch."

Student: "How do we attain enlightenment?"

Master: "Write until the empty space can speak."

Student: "What does that mean?"

Master: "Do you think I am a deaf?"

Student: "I don't know."

Master: "Bring your tone down."

Student: "I don't know what you mean."

Master: "Now listen to me carefully.

Ask your question aloud everyday

To where there is no one to listen;

Ask in a low tone,

Wait in silence to hear the reply,

Then someone will give you a clear-cut answer."

Student: "Is there a difference between

Rising in the world and gaining fame,

And yourself and Buddha?"

Master: "Repeat that question three times."

The student does as he was told.

Master: "Now you have got your answer.

Do you understand?"

Student: "I don't know."

Master: "How was it before you asked the question?"

Student: "I don't know."

Master: "Repeat that three times."

The student does as he was told, and then says,
"There was nothing before the question,
And such is 'rising in the world and gaining fame.'"

Master: "You might be right,
Yet you must wait for thirty years to find that out."

The dialogue goes on.

Master: "What is Buddha?"

Student: "All the stars in the sky are now in bed,
And as all the sentient and non-sentient beings
Are consumed, leaving nothing to be eaten,
One had to wander in hunger. What does that mean?"

Master: "Recite the mantra that enslaves devils."

The student does as he was told.

Master: "A great calamity would fall upon you
If you mumble even for a moment."

The student mumbles.

The master hits the student with the Dharma staff and says,
"What are you trying to say?"



To Master Beopgye

Master Dongshan admonishes himself:

"Do not seek fame, wealth, or prosperity.

Live a carefree life as the conditions warrant.

When breathing stops,

Where do we find the master of our life, our mind?

After one hundred years,

Where do we find our name?

Mend your clothes when they get tattered,

And beg for your food when there are no provisions.

How long do you think you can preserve

The empty bag of your body?

Do not waste your time chasing delusions in the dark,

Forgetting your study."

Practitioners should keep these lines in mind everyday

And rebuke oneself every now and then.

One should study hard,

Appreciate what one has studied,

Then understand how fast life flies by

And how important is the matter of birth and death.

One should keep these urgent understandings of life in mind,

Day and night, whether one is awake or asleep,

Whether one is walking, sitting, or lying down

And whenever and wherever one may be.

If one does as we have observed,

How could any delusion creep into our heads

To disturb our minds?

Hence an old Master said,

"Suppose there is a law that is superior to Nirvana,

To me that is but an illusion of a dream.

Then how can I care about

The law of delusion and falsehood of the world?"

The Great Master Shuanglin Fu says,
"I go to bed every night with Buddha
And wake up in the morning with Buddha in my arm.

Whether I sit or stand,
He is always with me.
Whether I talk or remain in silence,
He always acts with me.

There is not the tiniest of rifts between myself and the Buddha,
He is like a shadow.
If anyone wishes to know where Buddha is going,
Just listen to this talk."
Ascetic monks should ruminate upon these lines everyday
And realize their true nature through intensive practice.

Because of ignorance
About the precious jewels beyond imagination that reside within myself,
I have been suffering for millions of eons.
If I miss the opportunity in this life,
When should I learn and realize the truth?

With the feelings of fortune and felicity,
One should exert courage to practice meditation,
Or chant the name of Buddha, or memorize mantras
Until one accomplishes the Six Paramitas.

Yet one thing one should never forget is
To reflect light upon the original nature of mind
Rather than diversifying the practices
In realizing the consummation of ultimate truth.

Another important things is never to forget two words,
Namely, serenity and purity.
Purity is another name for Bodhi or enlightenment
And serenity, Nirvana.
But in the attainment of the consummation of ultimate truth,
The two words might not necessarily be items of Nirvana.

Hence the Master said,
"If one realizes that there is nothing to rely on,
One would achieve the great Dao or truth."

All manners of practice should be carried out

In the everyday life of practitioners,
Yet one should not forget that
Complete enlightenment should be achieved
In the wisdom of reflecting on self-nature.

This is the true meaning of the following passage:
"Besides all other manners of practice, No-thought,
Or seeing things without attachment, is the matter of most importance."

If the practice of the foregoing five Paramitas
Are devoid of wisdom,
It is like a blind man walking along the rugged road,
The reason being that principle and means are not in accord.

Originally, good and evil,
Enlightenment and the cycle of birth and death are not two, not separate,
Neither are the past and future, nor the ten directions and the tip of a
strand of fur.

Yet all phenomena are not one and the same either.
Who can possibly name "one" or "two,"
And who named the names anyway?

"This is the foot of the Jung-am Hermitage¹¹

In Mt. Cheonbo."

Normally, Buddha-Dharma or the Buddha's teaching

Is not something singular.

Its study is not something like

Learning the manner of transporting heavy timber or stone,

Or learning the skill of scholarship and martial arts.

It is neither something that frightens the sky,

Nor some special mechanism that moves the earth.

If one realizes that originally there was never delusion,

One would realize that the mind is so pure and peaceful

That there is no manipulation, no heavy and light,

No want and excess, no coming and going, no birth and death.

As Buddha-Dharma is such,

It is not something that only the enlightened would realize

And the deluded would not.

¹¹ Jung-am Monastery is at Myogak Temple in Mt. Cheonbi, Sannae-myeon, Daejeon, South Chungcheong Province.

It is only to realize and retain through such experience
That originally there is nothing to be called this or that.
It is not the right way to study based on arranging names and forms.

Please just answer my simple questions:

A: "What is the true meaning of this?"

B: "Mountains, rivers, and earth,
Light and dark, bright and emptiness."

A: "You have already fallen into names and forms."

B: "What do you mean by names and forms?"

A: "Appearance and disappearance of thought

Signify the succession of birth and death.

Now, how could you cut them off?"

B: "What is the thing that appears and disappears

That you are talking about?"

A: "You are right. I got lost."

B: "I will take my story back."

Ascetic practitioners should first have the right kind of eyes.

If they do, how could anyone talk about
The Buddha's teachings and worldly teachings,
Or talk about truth in front of them?

But if they do not have the right eyes,
It is like a person dangling on the precipice;
It is like merely talking about a green bamboo stalk, a yellow flower,
The singing of a bush warbler, or the tune of a swallow.

If anyone dares to ask, "Where is the Buddha-nature?"
The teacher would laugh and rise.

*The following is a note from Ven. Master Hanam, the First Patriarch of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism:

"These brief messages should not be taken lightly. One should study them hard and understand their insight and true meaning. If one has attained inspiration, one should not remain in silence. Even though they are but a few lines of words and passages, they are worth countless volumes of doctrines and protestations. I sincerely beg your pardon for my superfluous comment."



Great Master Budai's 'Be in Perfect Accord with this Pure Mind' Dharma Talk

Our life is like a running horse,
A dew drop on the tip of a blade of grass in the setting sun.
It never persists. So fleeting is our youth and life.

It is like a heap of shit and a dream,
An enemy, a thief, and a vampire,
Vain, meaningless; nothing of worth within them.

A saying from Confucius: "I want to save my words."
Another quotation from Confucius:
"There is nothing that is right or wrong."

A quotation from Zhuangzi:¹²

"The great precious stone that the
Yellow Emperor lost is found by a water demon."

Another quotation from Zhuangzi:

"Heaven and the earth are but a finger,
And all the phenomena in the universe but a horse."

Ascetic monks should study hard
In search of their pure original mind,
Then without striving for countless numbers of way to attain
Serenity and sublime truth,
They will surely achieve them all and realize that
There is no difference between Buddha and Patriarch.

A master said,
"It has long passed since the sages have departed,
And ascetic practitioners are wasting their whole life
Idling around without even knowing
What the tradition of the household of the Order is.

¹² Zhuangzi (莊子) (369-286 BCE) was a famous Chinese philosopher credited with the text of the same name. He is said to be the inheritor of the Daoist lineage from Laozi.

It is no wonder that the Eye and Treasure of Right Dharma
Has lost its lustre buried deep in the mire,
Whereas false and evil people are striding around
Disgracing the teachings of Buddha.
Alas! How could all this be expressed in words?"

It is the words of the Sixth Patriarch Huineng,
"Thinking amiss is the sentient being;
Thinking aright, the Buddha."

A quotation from the great Master Guishan:
"If one could only return to one's original pure nature
Through sublime means that are beyond our thought,
One's inside and outside abide undisturbed,
To realize that true nature of Buddha as such is
None other than to understand that
The ultimate principle and reality are not separate, not two."

If one truly attains the bliss of this wisdom,
One would become equal to all Buddhas,
But if not, one would at once fall into the wheel
Of birth and death forevermore.

It is said even if the dragon might change its bones,
It can't change its scales;
And even if an ordinary being might become a Buddha,
He cannot change his face.
Thus, unenlightened nature itself is Buddha-nature,
And the impermanent body itself is Dharma-body.

Truth is not far away.
Yet one only sees the objective world
When one opens one's eyes.
The problem is that one sees the objective world
Even with eyes closed.

When someone asks, "What is Buddha?"
The answer is of course, "You are the Buddha."
But masters avoid such an easy way
In their instruction to ordinary beings on how to attain enlightenment.

The ancient sages did not spare efforts
In their ardent instruction.
Hence, one should study hard, reflect upon oneself,
Practice with a keen mind, and

Visit enlightened teachers far and wide for instruction
To attain the Dao or truth.

Everyone has equal abilities,
Whether one is wise or foolish, noble or ignoble,
Regardless of their age and sex;
Everyone has the ability to become a Buddha.

Alas!
Then what is your purpose in shaving your hair
And wearing the gray robes?

If the eye is attracted to the light,
One would be born a hungry ghost;
If the ear is attracted to the sound,
One would be born in the lowest Hell;
If one is drunk with both light and sound,
One would lose one's sense by the poisoned wine
And fall into the eternal dungeon of delusion,
With a bursting pain in the head,
The tearing pain of the bowels, hands, and feet,
Which is like the fearful sight of a dog being cast into a boiling pot,

The pain of which is like the pain of peeling off
The top of the live turtle,
Never knowing whether one is going to the heavenly realm
Or to the dungeon of Hell.
What a pitiful sight to observe!

If we look back on
When old masters took leave of the world,
Whether they departed while sitting
Or standing,
They all departed as if going through an open door
Without any pain or hindrance.

When the teachers of the precepts died,
They went striking their Dharma staffs;
Elder Bulin died with hilarious laughter, without notice;
Some died putting down chopsticks while taking their meals;
Some died stretching their legs, or standing on their heads.

All these little ceremonies of the corporeal body are
In fact, the ultimate result of the consummation
Of the practice of concentration and wisdom.

Alas!

Yet they are not a bit different from us,

(And what about us?)

The great Teacher Dongshan said,

"The most painful thing is to lose one's body

In the Dharma robe."

We all must take heed.

There were four repetitions of "Alas!"

Who could fathom the regretful feelings as deep as the sea?

I write this to Master Seunghwa.



Dialogue with Young Woodcutters on Majeong Peak

A Sunim encountered a group of young woodcutters

At the foot of Majeong mountain pass:

Sunim: "Do you know who I am?"

Boys: "No, we don't."

Sunim: "Then, do you see me?"

Boys: "Yes, we do."

Sunim: "If you do not know me, how could you see me?"

Then Sunim said to them, "If you hit me with this stick,

I will give you a lot of money to buy candy."

A smart boy steps forward and says, "Is that true?"

And then he hits Sunim with a stick.

Sunim: "Hit me."

The boy hits the Sunim again.

Sunim: "Why don't you hit me?

If you could hit me,

You could also hit the Buddha, the Patriarchs,

The Buddhas of the three ages, past, present, and future,

And the Patriarchs of the Order,

And all the old Dharma teachers in the world."

The boy says to Sunim,

"I hit you, and you say I did not hit you.

You are deceiving us,

Just so you don't have to give us the money

That you promised."

Sunim gives them money and says,

"All the world is in confusion, and I alone am awake.

I will live the rest of my life in the village down below,

Willy-nilly."



The Verse Written on the Folding Screen Given to the Geumbong Dang

Seeing that there is nothing that is not a daydream,
A man retires into the deep mountains relying on a walking-stick,
With a bottle of wine and a meal bowl
Where there are only clouds above and shrubs around,
Where there are only the pleasant sounds
Of singing birds and a running creek.

He sees an old pine tree thousands of feet tall
Adorned with green vines around its trunk,
Builds a small cottage
To compose, now and then, a few lines of verse with close friends
About the mood of the surroundings in the mist of the mountain,

Or to burn incense and meditate in quietude,
Forgetting the worries of the mundane world.

He sees all the true realities reflected
In the sublimity of the empty mind.
What more than this do we need in this earthly existence?

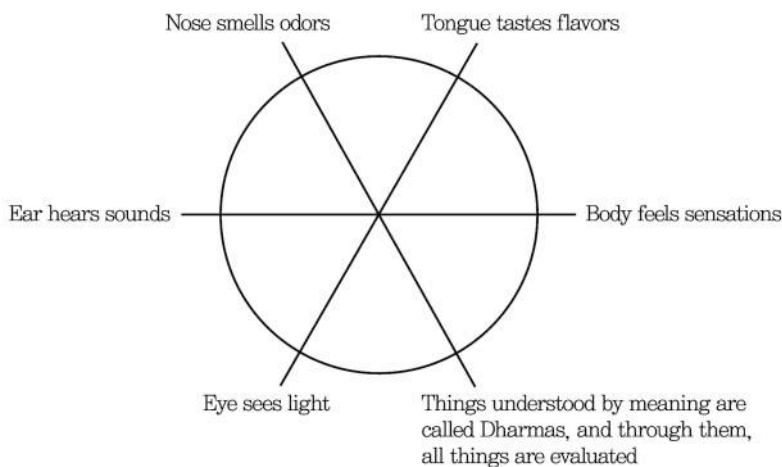
He sees all the wonders in heaven and earth, and
In the cup of wine from the fair land.
He then dumps some ash on his head, puts mud on his face,
And then rambles on the green grass banks.
What a life!

By Gyeongheo
On the way to the southwestern region
Late March of the Blue Dragon¹³

¹³ "Blue Dragon" refers to the Spring season.



Demonstration of a Thing to Priestling Gyeongseok¹⁴



¹⁴ This Dharma talk is from a newly unearthed hand-written copy that was owned by the Grand Seon Master Hanam, the First Patriarch of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism.

This body of a circle is the same to all ordinary beings and sages.
Yet the ordinary beings confuse the bright illumination of the circle
When they encounter these Six Sense Realms.

On the other hand, the masters are able to concentrate
Their single-pointed mind without confusion
When they encounter these Six Sense Realms.
The principle of this body of the circle is the essence
Of harmony of all phenomena in the universe,
And if one is able to reflect upon it with insight
And sees its ultimate emptiness,
One may break through the gate of the sages in an instant.

The secret means to success is to maintain
The mind bright and clear through constant practice
Without disturbance regardless of the time and place.

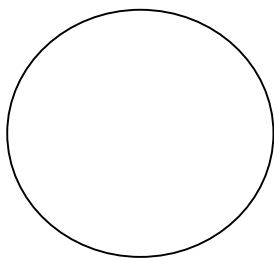
Meditation practice is to break through the gate of the Patriarchs,
And sublime enlightenment can be attained
Only through the complete cessation of thought.

Karmic power cannot be overcome by intelligence,

Nor can birth and death be overcome by deceptive wisdom.
The only way to overcome the karmic cycle of birth and death
Is through the practice of meditation.

Following the ways of fortune and carnal pleasure
Comes from not practicing single-minded meditation,
And a deranged mind on one's deathbed
Also comes from the same misfortune.

The light of the lonely mind of the full moon
Has engulfed the entirety of phenomena of the world;
Then what could it be when light
And the whole objective world are all forgotten?





To the Dharma Disciple Mangong

The Master gives a letterless seal to the disciple Susan Wolmyeon,
Hits the Dharma staff once, then says,
"‘These words are nothing more than what they say.’
Now, tell me what that means."

The Master hits the Dharma staff once again and says,
"‘One laughs and doesn't know where it has gone to.’
Now, tell me what that means."

"The color of the sea of Anmyeon Island in spring
Is dark green," says the Master,
Who then drops the staff and comes down from the platform.
"A-hem!"



To the Dharma Disciple Hyewol

If one understands the law of ultimate reality of all phenomena,
One would know that self-nature is empty.
Thus, if one realizes the nature of Dharma,
One would see Sambhogakaya or the Body of Pure Light.

Leaving common practices behind,
I proclaim the letterless seal against common practice,
And paint the Blue One Pillar Gate in one color.

Late spring in the year of Tiger
Presented to Hyewol from Gyeongheo



A Parting Gatha to Hanam Sunim

By my nature, I love to associate with the people of the world,
And I love to drag my tail in the mud.

I have lived for forty-four years with my crippled legs,
And happened to meet my Dharma friend named Wongae-sa
At Haein Monastery.

His disposition was sincere and upright,
And his scholarship, most distinguished.
We spent a cold winter together
And we are parting today.

Everything around us—the clouds of smoke
In the morning and evening,

The mountains and the sea, far and near—
Also seems to regret our parting

Fleeting life hastens our old age
And it is not easy to meet such a good friend again.
How then could we express
Our feelings of forlorn parting.

An old master said,
"We can have many sociable friends,
Yet there are very few friends with whom
We could share our innermost heart."

Without you, alas!
With whom could I share intellectual dialogue?
Here are a few lines I am composing
As a token of our friendship.

"The grand aspiration of a great bird
High up in the Arctic Ocean;
How long have you been buried
Underground?"

Parting is an everyday affair, not so hard to bear;
But when shall we meet again once we part
This fleeting world?"

Hanam Sunim received the verse from Master Gyeongheo,
But only sent the following reply of regret
And did not follow the Master:

"The frost-bitten chrysanthemum
And plum blossoms in the snow have only just fallen.
How sad it is that I cannot be with you for long.

There is an everlasting bright mind of the moon.
The forlorn hopes of the mundane world are futile."



The Platform Dharma Speech¹⁵

The Master hits the Dharma staff once and says,
"‘These words are nothing more than what they say.’
Now, tell me what that means."

He hits the Dharma staff once again and says,
"'One laughs and does not know where it has gone.'
Now, tell me what that means.
The color of the sea around Anmyeon Island
In Spring is dark blue."

I do not care about Buddha and sentient beings;
All year round, I am only a drunken crazy monk.

¹⁵ This is from *The Collected Writings of Cheongheo*.

Sometimes I just look far into the distance for no reason,
Looking at the blue mountain range beyond the clouds.
People talk about warm and cool but what are they?
Things are sometimes round and square.

All the sentient beings in the whole universe are
Devoid of sublime intellect.
It is best, then, not to try and meddle with them.

Mountains are without words,
Water flows on its way with no great trouble,
Flowers blossom and birds sing.

This is the way of the life of the sage.
So what is the need for following
The ways of mundane world?



The Way to Be a Monk

It is not so easy to be a monk,
Certainly, it is not
To be well-fed and well clothed that one becomes a monk.

It is to be a Buddha, beyond birth and death,
And to be a Buddha,
One must find one's mind in oneself.

If one wishes to find one's mind,
One must realize that this body of mine is but a living corpse;
Must realize that everything,
Regardless of good or bad, is but a dream;
Must realize that a thing that is living in the morning
Might not be living in the evening;

Must realize that when one dies, one might fall into Hell,
Or be born an animal, or a ghost with eternal torment.

Hence, one must try to find one's mind,
Leaving all worldly affairs behind.
One must strive diligently to discover, with great doubt,
How the mind looks, or whether it has any form or not,
Whether it is large or small,
Whether its color is yellow or blue,
Whether it is light or dark,
This mind that sees, and hears, and thinks.

How shall one do it?
One must do it as a cat catches a mouse;
As a hen hatches her eggs;
As an old mouse gnaws the rice box to make a hole.

Thus, one must concentrate one's mind on one point
With a Cyclopean doubt,
Whether one is working or not.

If one studies hard in this manner,

Always doubting the question with all one's heart,
Sooner or later, one would surely attain enlightenment.

It is not so easy to be born a human being,
Not so easy to be born a male,
Not so easy to become a monk,
Not so easy to encounter the right teachings of the Buddha
Even if one has become a monk.
Hence one should weight these issues very carefully.

Buddha says,
"Becoming a human being is like a speck of dirt on a finger nail,
And the one who is born an animal
Is like the earth of the world."

He also says,
"If one loses the human body,
It is almost impossible to be born a human being again.

Instead, one will dwell in Hell unaware,
As if one is dwelling in the pleasant mountain park;
One will frequent the houses of the evil ghosts and the animals

As if one were frequenting one's own house.

But once one attains Buddhahood,
Without suffering,
The problems of birth and death are overcome."
Hence one should pay attention to these teachings of the Buddha.

There once was a Seon Master named Kwon
Who practiced from sunrise to sunset,
And at the end of the day,
Stretching out his legs, he started to cry,
Saying that he again wasted a whole day
Without attaining enlightenment.

There are some who chastise themselves like this everyday,
And there is no end to the list of such devout practitioners.

They practiced without thoughts of life and death,
Without any cares about eating and wearing clothes,
Without even sleeping.
Thus it is imperative that
We should also practice as they do.

The great Master Dongshan writes,
"One should not seek fame,
Should not seek wealth,
And should not seek prosperity.

Instead, one should live in accordance with one's conditions.
When one's clothes wear out, mend them again and again;
When there are no provisions, go out and beg for food.

When breathing stops, that is the end of our life.
When we die, what is the use of a name?
How long do you think you can sustain this passing life?
One should not forget to study;
One also should not waste time while dwelling in the dark."

After attaining enlightenment,
One should always keep one's mind pure,
Always keep it serene without hindrance.

Then there would be no end to the great rewards.
For instance, there would be no pain on the deathbed,
There would be no sickness,

And you will be born in the Pure Land of Bliss, just as you wish.

Buddha says,

"Regardless of sex and age,

If anyone accepts and studies the teachings of this Dharma,

One would surely attain Buddhahood."

How could we not believe him?

The Fifth Patriarch Hongren¹⁶ says,

"Study your mind and you will surely attain enlightenment,"

And he swore, "If you do not believe my words,

You would be eaten by a tiger, life after life,

And if I have deceived you,

I would surely be cast into Hell in the next life."

Shall we not trust him?

A practitioner should keep the mind as the great mountain,

Undisturbed,

Should keep the mind as wide as the great space;

Should reflect on the Buddha-Dharma with wisdom

¹⁶ Hongren (弘忍) (601-674 CE) was considered to be the 5th patriarch of the Chan tradition and is said to have passed the lineage on to Huineng.

Like the moon reflects the sun;

Should never be disturbed

Whether the people say that you are right or wrong;

Should never discriminate and get involved

In the others' matters of right and wrong;

Should keep serenity of mind

Whether meeting good things or bad,

And remain as a fool, as an idiot, as dumb, as blind,

As deaf, as a little child to others without any thought;

Then the mind will be free of delusions of itself.

Even if one is smart and one's arguments logical,

It would be like preparing food with a handful of shit,

Or would be like trying to make white jade out of clay;

It will be of no use for either cultivation or enlightenment.

Hence one should never try to be smart and intelligent.

One should regard others' deaths as one's own

And never trust one's own body,

Never neglecting the study of mind.

One should always cast earnest doubt about the mind,
How it looks, in coming or going,
Just like a hungry man longs for food.

Buddha says,
"All worldly things are impermanent,
And no matter what people do, it ultimately ends up
In the matter of birth and death.
Hence, the true teaching is to realize one's own mind."

One should never take intoxicating liquor
Because it only makes one's mind murky.

One should avoid sensual pleasure,
Otherwise one will surely be attached to it.

One should never kill a living life
Because it will provoke anger in the mind.

One should not take meat
Because it deranges one's mind.

One should never lie
Because it induces selfishness.

One should not steal things
Because it increases the craving mind.
One should not take garlic and shallots
Because they arouse lust and wrath.

And one should pay no attention to all other things
That are harmful to one's practice.

The Great Master Bojo says,
"As property and sensual pleasure are
More disastrous than the venom of a vampire,
One should always stay away from these calamities."
Hence one should keep the advice of the Master in mind,
Otherwise one's practice will face many difficulties.

Buddha says,
"One should restrain anger
Because it brings millions of sins."

Ancient Masters also say,
"Anger turns one into a tiger, a snake, and a bee,
And other such mischievous animals and insects.
On the other hand, the
Cheerful mind turns one into a butterfly and a bird.

A petty mind turns one into an ant and a mosquito;
A craving mind turns one into a hungry ghost;
An excess of craving and anger
Will cause one to fall into Hell.
As mind is thus the cause of all kinds of consequences,
One becomes a Buddha when the mind is completely at rest.

As even virtuous mind may fall from the heavenly realm
And turn to an animal in Hell,
The best way is to leave even the virtuous mind behind
And then empty one's mind completely.

Then one will have nowhere they must go,
And moreover, if one's mind is pure
Without any delusion or despondency,
One would be free from the dark realms,

And one's pure mind will lead to the path of Buddhahood.

All one has to do is to study one's mind

Bearing a constant doubt

That will bring about a pure and peaceful mind,

And which in turn enables one to attain enlightenment

And become a Buddha.

This is the direct path to which one should hold fast.

If one seeks out, reads, and teaches

This Buddha-Dharma to others,

It would be as worthy as studying the

Eighty Thousand Volume Tripitaka.¹⁷

If one studies this teaching faithfully,

One would become a Buddha in one's own lifetime.

Hence, one should not raise any doubt about this message.

Have faith and go straight.

¹⁷ The *Palman Daejanggyoung* (팔만대장경) (National Treasure No. 32 and part of the UNESCO World Heritage) is a Korean collection of 80,000 carved woodblock sutras comprising a full collection of the Buddhist Tripitaka. It was carved during the Khitan invasion (993-1019) during the Koryeo Dynasty (918-1392) as a means to defend the country through the divine protection of the Buddha.

The mountain is deep and water flows,
All the trees and grass are full of life,
And I hear the wondrous songs of birds singing from all directions.

Without visitors from the outside world,
One sits quietly to study one's mind.
If the mind within oneself is not Buddha,
Where do we find it?
You have just learned that it is not so easy to study
Yet, it is at the same time the most precious Dharma.
Why not then study faithfully?

Yet be not too hasty,
Otherwise you shall fall ill or get a terrible headache.
Calm your mind and make it peaceful.

Beware!
Do not strain your thought.
Just retain your doubt.

II. Prefaces



The Rules of Discipline for the Practitioners at the Meditation Hall of Gyemyeong Hermitage in Beomeo Monastery

Paying homage to the Seon Hall

And leaving one's name in the list of practitioners

Are kinds of karmic fulfillment.

But if one thinks that one is not worthy

Of leaving one's name to posterity,

It means that one's perseverance and competency

Of the illustrious doctrine are not firm enough.

Hence, preserving and propagating right views on truth

And the sublime meaning of the illustrious enlightenment of the Buddha

Seems to be the task of capable brothers.
Moreover, as life is so quickly fleeting,
And so grave is the matter of birth and death,
How could we waste our time?

If one really has awakened through strenuous practice,
The minds of craving, anger,
And defilement themselves are enlightenment,
And this reveals itself in the flowers of the iris, the willow
And in all other objects.
It is beneficial to everyone,
And there will be nothing that could not be saved.

True practitioners should live like fools in their daily lives
Because even if one is free of attachment
Without any residue of sentiment,
One might still have some earnest desire to be pure;

And even if one's mind is always bright and shining,
And has attained the firm root of sublimity,
It is but half way to complete enlightenment.

An old master said,
"One takes up a Dharma staff,
And without even looking back,
Starts toward the valley of thousands of mountain peaks."

Suppose one has attained
Such a sublime stage of enlightenment
And knew how to depart to the destination where one was going.
That still does not necessarily mean
That one also knows the way back home.

An old master said to a young practitioner,
"How are you, Sudhana? Where are you going?"

Sudhana's answer was,
"The night is bright and clear,
And the wind sweeps the blue railing."
It might be true, but where did he get such ideas?

Alas!
One should always keep in mind that
It is very rare to be born a human being,

As is our encounter with the illustrious teachings of Buddha,
And leaving one's name in the list of practitioners
After attending meditation practice.
All distinguished elders, listen!
It is certain that there must be rules of discipline
In meditation practice,
And these rules shall be established with the agreement
Of all the members of the Order.
Hence these sublime rules should be kept without changes.

I pray unto you all.
Keep the rules faithfully and propagate
The illustrious Dharma far and wide.

On the opening day of the summer retreat, June 10, 1899.
Monk Gyeongheo Seong-u
On the way back to the southwestern region.

The Rules of Discipline:

1. The responsibilities of the Seon Master and the Karma-dara
[manager of general affairs] are enormous. Therefore, the appointment of
these posts must be conducted with discretion. They must be awarded to

personages of great insight and virtue.

2. The Seon Hall is the place where monks from all directions cultivate their mind and seek the truth. Therefore, personages who manage the monastery must not be narrow-minded or inept.

3. After the opening of the retreat, the monastery should not accept further members, and once accepted, they should not leave during the retreat.

4. Personages who are impolite and disorderly should not be accepted. The personages who are seriously ill should also not be accepted. In doing so, it is feared that the study of Dharma and the community would be hampered.

5. The retreat program must be managed by the Head Temple, and the registrar must be faithful to his job and make the practitioners comfortable.

6. A true practitioner should not be hindered by either noise or quietude. This will enable one to overcome the problems of birth-death and Nirvana. Even after meditation practice is complete, one should not

snicker or make noises. Such behaviors hamper practice.

7. Give warnings thrice to those who disturb fellow practitioners or disrupt the harmony of the community. If they do not stop their ill behaviors even after the final warning, they must be removed through a general meeting on discipline.

8. During community work, one should cooperate with others, not skipping out or lagging behind.

9. One who violates the rules forbidding alcoholic beverage and obscenity, acts that the Buddha prohibited, should be removed. Laundry should be allowed only once every six days.

10. Positions: The Head Master, Community Master, Senior Seon Master, Dharma Hall Attendant, Guest Attendant, Gardner, Nurse, Cook Master, Restroom Attendant, Clerk, Tea Attendant, Provider of Greens, Woodcutter, Cookery Manager, Steward Assistant, Steward, and Superintendent.



Compact for the Construction of the Seon Hall at Beomeo Monastery

Buddha transmitted the Eye and Treasure of Right Dharma
And the Subtle Mind of Nirvana
To Mahakasyapa and then it has been handed down
To the succeeding Dharma disciples.

The sublimity and profoundness of the truth
Are like the power of a great number of ministers
And the absolute power of the great emperor,
Much superior to the teachings of the Three Vehicles.

Equipped with both expedience and merit,
The qualities of truth are like the mysterious medicine of a Daoist hermit

That restores even the life of the dead. If one can concentrate one's mind
On enlightenment and reflect the light of the mind,
One could be equal to all past Buddhas.
Then why should one waste the effort of incalculable eons?

If one can only concentrate one's mind,
One would be free from karmic causality
Even if one does not study hard
And falls into torpor and delusion.

About half of the Buddha's lifelong teachings
Belong to the discourses of expedience
Which should be distinguished from
The consummation of his illustrious teachings.

Buddha emphasizes,
"Rely on the Perfect Understanding Sutras
Not on the Imperfect Understanding Sutras."

It is manifest and beyond disputation that
The expedient teachings are artful means and devices,
Not the Buddha's ultimate teachings and truth.

It is truly deplorable that
Many practitioners are deluded by these expedient devices
And ruin their life-long study.

The sage Guye says,
"Concentration of mind can prevent myriad things from maladies."
If the wizard Hoinam Wang-an could transform
Dogs and chicken and send them to the heavens on a cloud,
Why not the supreme creature of all creation—man?
If a wizard could prevent myriad disasters through magic powers,
Why not the Buddha's Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment?

Buddha says,
"Even if one does not believe the Buddha's teaching,
That fortunate occasion will enable one to attain Buddhahood;
Even if one does not understand the Buddha's teaching,
It is far better than the bliss of men and heavenly beings."

This is the reason why we are now establishing the mutual compact
To attain enlightenment beyond birth and death
Through incomparable causal conditions.

What is the Land of Bliss beyond birth and death?

"It is the land of high green mountains,
The endless blue sea, small fleeting clouds in the sky,
And the land of gentle breeze among the pine trees.

They are all full of bliss just as they are,
Pervading in the sky and on the earth forever and evermore.
Although there is no way to express their sublime function,
Their solid existence is as hard as a diamond."

An old master said,
"No study of Prajna [wisdom] is wasteful."
Hence, if anyone truly aspires to attain Buddhahood,
One should make a great resolution.



The List of Practitioners at the Seon Hall in Haein Monastery

Q: "What is the purpose of writing the list of practitioners at the Seon Hall in Haein Monastery? "

A: "It is to record it for posterity."

Q: "What is the purpose of recording the list for posterity?"

A: "Our body is like a bubble

And a candlelight before the wind.

What is the thing that exerts to take heed

Of the impermanence of our life, and then strives to practice? "

What is the thing that realizes the emptiness of things,

The wisdom that is bright as the sun

And able to attain enlightenment?

The posterity that looks upon the people of today

Is like the people of today seeing their progenitors;

And the posterity that looks upon its posterity

Is like the posterity looking at the people of today.

Alas!

The practitioners who are practicing during the retreat

Should take these thoughts deep into their hearts."

On the day opening the summer retreat, April 1909

A sick monk on the way to the southwestern region

Respectfully recorded by Gyeongheo Seong-u



Preface on The Eye and Treasure of Right Dharma

The Chan Master Guifeng says,
"Buddha's teachings are wide open even
To the eight tribes of the Four Heavenly Kings
In the hundreds and thousands of cosmos,
And the essential meaning of the verses on meditation
Is composed to fit the tradition of the Seon School."

The teachings of the Buddha are so vast
That when they are spread out
They are not so easy for the people to understand,
Yet when they are fit into a compact style of verse

They are very easy to comprehend.
With the cooperation of Seon Master Hangeom,
Who is in accord with my idea,
I am planning to edit five volumes of books
With a fine selection of Dharma talks of all teachers,
Selected from ten volumes of collected writings
And Dharma records, as well as from the songs of meditation,
To be used as the right way for the practitioners.

They earnestly implore one to learn
Even a single word or a phrase
With kind instructions for a clear and easy understanding
Without any doubt or misgivings, so that one may become a Buddha.

Hence if anyone studies these collections earnestly
And reflects upon one's original mind,
Even if one has not seen the Sutras or heard the teachings of the Buddha,
One will find them all in these collections.

Besides all these teachings of the Buddha,
The collections also contain the ways of practice,
Which add another burden for the practitioners to bear.

Hence those who have set their minds on the attainment of truth
Should shape up and strive harder.
But, whether one is talented or not,
We should be very careful in our study
Because there might be quite a few errors
In transcribing the original text
And in the grammatical particles,
Which might lead to misunderstandings.

When people wish to copy these volumes,
They must be very careful both in copying and proofreading,
And if they spread the teachings
To sentient beings far and wide,
That merit would earn enough good karma to become a Buddha.
One should make a great resolution and not miss the good fortune.



The Regulations for the Construction and Renovation of the Meditation Hall and Sangwon Hermitage at Hwaeom Monastery

Dhyana [meditation] is in principle

A direct shortcut to enlightenment.

It is high and far off, beyond the realm of the Three Vehicles.

If one realizes "the original face" of one's mind,

One may be equal with all the past Buddhas.

Its law is so precious and sublime that

There is nothing comparable to it.

That is the reason why,

Since the coming of Bodhidharma to China,
It spread to our country and produced countless numbers
Of sages who attained Buddhahood.

In the recent period of our country,
The way of truth has declined to the extent
Of its extinction.

Even those who set their minds to achieving enlightenment,
Not having striven hard enough from the start,
Fell into torpor and delusion, wasting their time.

Not having attained any truth, they just wail,
Not knowing how to instruct karmic doers and idol worshippers.
Alas! There is no way to save them.

There was a Meditation Hall
Ever since the establishment of the temple,
And because of its excellent location,
It produced many sages of enlightenment.

The reason it had been closed for a time

Was that, besides other inevitable factors,
There was no teacher to instruct the Dharma.
The elder Cheonghwa's devout and great vow
To establish the congregation of meditation here
Came to bear fruit in late spring of 1867
By the decision of many venerable monks who assembled here.

But unfortunately, the abbot who was appointed later
Sometimes closed the Hall or refused to accept practitioners
According to his selfish ends and conveniences,
Forgetting the great duty of instructing the teachings of the Buddha,
The original intent of the establishment of the temple,
And the great devotion of the elder's purpose of reestablishing
The meditation congregation.

It is a grave sin to interrupt the seeds of the Buddha
And the defilement of prajna-wisdom.
How can he escape the retribution of causality?

There is a saying in the sacred book of Confucianism,
"You love sheep but I love rites,"
And a Sutra also says,

"A piece of pure mind is better than constructing the great stupas
Of precious stones as many as the sands of the Ganges River."

It also says,

"The one who has fallen into the Three Evil Paths,
After hearing the supreme teaching of the Buddha,
Is better than one who makes offerings to the Buddha
As numerous as the sands of the Ganges River."

An old master said,

"Even if one does not believe
When one hears the teachings of Buddha,
One already has made a good causal relation with the Buddha;
Even if one does not accomplish what one has learned,
One shall receive the bliss of a human and heavenly being."
It is due to the power of wisdom
That is contained in all the paths of Nirvana.

Thus, even though one fails to attain enlightenment
Because of torpor and delusion,
Practicing meditation is a better achievement than the
Success of the Three Vehicles.

It is my sincere wish for all practitioners in this monastery
To read and retain this message in their heart
Not only to succeed but to uphold the tradition of Seon, as well.
On the other hand,
If anyone teaches the Buddha's teaching with negligence
And close to the illustrious assembly,
One would surely receive the punishment
Of the gods of the heaven and the earth.
If there is anyone who does not heed such an awful warning,
I have no way to help them.

Early December, 1900
On the way back to the southwestern region
Gyeongheo



Proclamation of the Compact on Attaining Enlightenment and Being Born in the Heaven of Happiness Together through the Cultivation of 'Samadhi and Prajna'

The *Avatamasaka Sutra* [Flower Adornment Sutra] says,

"One should look deeply into the nature of the Dharma realm,"

And the *Lotus Sutra* also says,

"Form itself is complete tranquility and great peace."

This is what all living beings should investigate and realize

Through their eyes, ears, and bodies.

The *Diamond Sutra* says,

"All forms are delusions,"

And the *Sutra of Great Extinction* also says,

"All actions are impermanent,
And this is the law of birth and death."

If so, all the karmic actions of Six Roots
Or Six Sense-faculties, internal organs, good and evil,
And non-action arise from the body of living beings.

Everyone knows about these verses,
Including the little children in the temple
And the young novices who only consume rice and porridge,
Yet even the venerable masters
Who have studied Sutras and practiced for so long
Usually overlook them and pay little attention,
Without raising a question about their essence,
Let alone the attainment of awakening
By cultivation and deep reflection on the mind.

Alas!

This delusion of the body is like a bubble,
Sturdy youth slips away like a running horse,
And our life is like a dewdrop on the blade of grass

And the candlelight before the wind that disappears in an instant.

Our body is full of foul blood and pus,
And out of nine holes flow out offensive matters.
Such is our life and body, fleeting fast and impure.
How sad and disgusting they are!

Yet people who are confused by a discriminating mind,
Like a man drunken with foul wine,
Do not know how to steady their step and waste their time,
Continuing to commit crimes without reflection.
What a deplorable sight to behold!

Out of great pity and compassion,
Buddha spread the three stages of his lifelong teachings
With supernatural power, wisdom, and expedience,
To deliver human and heavenly beings.

Then, finally, Buddha transmitted the Right Views on
Truth and Sublime Meanings of Illustrious Enlightenment,
And the Subtle Mind of Nirvana to Mahakasyapa.

Then it has been transmitted to the succeeding Dharma disciples,
Down to Bodhidharma who taught and spread the illustrious
Teachings of Buddha far and wide in China
With the principal teachings, "Do not depend on words,
Point directly to the mind, and then see your true nature."
It is the principle of Dao and the essence of Seon Buddhism.

The shortcut to the path of Dao is
"To bring to rest all causal conditions
Of the sensory perceptions and the conflicts within.
Unless one's mind is like a formidable wall,
One will never attain the Dao or truth."
And the way of seeing the essence of the Dao is
"The way of watching the mind embrace all actions."

The great function of the Dao is such that
"When mind is magnanimous,
It pervades the entire cosmos,
But when the mind is mean,
Not even the point of a needle can penetrate it."

"When one withdraws to his original position after three prostrations,

The Master approves of him, saying,
'You have attained my marrow,"
And this is the formal way of showing the lineage of the Dao.

Besides all these,
There are hundreds of thousands of expediences,
All of which are to direct sentient beings
Towards the right way of practice.

Someone says, "When Buddha held up a flower,
Hundreds of thousands of people were bewildered,
While only Mahakasyapa understood the meaning and smiled.

Thus, sentient beings of the last era of the illustrious teachings
Are still in the dark,
Yet they say, 'I understand the meaning of the Patriarch.'
This is pure nonsense."
Such cases are too numerous to enumerate.

There is nothing strange about it
Because these people who are still in the dark
Neglect visiting the great Seon Masters for instruction.

If people do not realize and reflect upon their folly,
It ruins not only one's own life but also those of others.
Hence I put forth the following questions:

Whenever Buddha discoursed the Dharma,
He came in the form of the Buddha of Transformation,
And that was the reason why there were so many personages,
Such as Mahakasyapa, Ananda and the great congregation.

The reason the Dharma was transmitted to one person
Was to establish the first head of the sect
After the passing of the Buddha,
Just as there are not two suns in the sky,
And there are not two kings in the state.

Thus, transmitting the Dharma to one person does not mean that
There is only one person who has awakened.
There were countless numbers of practitioners saved
By the Patriarchs and sages in India and in China.

A story tells us that the branches¹⁸ that were stored away
By the noble Ubagukda filled a thirty-feet high stone-room,
And the number of masters saved by the great Master Mazu
Numbered eighty-eight.

One time there were one thousand five hundred practitioners
Sitting at one place practicing,
Leading eventually to the formation of the Five Houses of Seon sect.

Sometimes, the number of students that attained enlightenment
Under one Master numbered
From at least ten to more than one thousand.

If anyone misunderstands the true meaning of the story
“Only Mahakasyapa smiled,” when millions of
Other practitioners were dumb-founded in amazement
While the Buddha was holding up a flower,
And if this prevents the people in the last era
Of the illustrious teachings of the Buddha from seeking the teachings
Of the Patriarchs, regarding them as fools,

¹⁸ Every time the noble Master helped his student attain enlightenment, he stored away a branch of a tree to keep a record of the number of students he helped to attain enlightenment.

How one could explain all the above stories of great numbers
Of people delivered by the great Dharma teachers?

Otherwise, all the above stories must be pure fabrications.
Yet they are all proven facts, manifested in the annals,
And there is no way to disprove them.

If only Mahakasyapa had awakened on Vulture Peak,
While countless numbers of people during the last era
Of the illustrious teachings of Buddha have been delivered,
Does that mean that the people of the last era
Of the illustrious teachings of the Buddha are superior
To the people on Vulture Peak at the time of the Buddha?
Of course that could not be the case.

What is meant by the phrase that “Buddha transmitted
The Dharma only to Mahakasyapa”?
According to your opinion,
Is it that he was the only one
Who was qualified to be transmitted?

Unfortunately, if that were true, what would have happened

If there were no noble Mahakasyapa?
If that were true, that would mean that there would have been no way
To transmit the right views of truth
And the Sublime Meaning of the Illustrious Enlightenment of the
Buddha.

Moreover, if anyone says that the enlightenment
Attained in the last era of the illustrious teachings of the Buddha
Is inferior to the enlightenment attained on Vulture Peak,
That is even more in the wrong.

There is no inborn Maitreya
Or Shakyamuni Buddha without cultivation.
I have heard the instructions of great teachers
That we should cultivate our minds and attain Buddhahood,
But I've never heard of the teachings
That the people of the last era
Should not study concentration of the mind and wisdom.
No matter how one tries to justify such a claim,
They are all unreasonable and miss the point.

Hence the intent of Buddha's transmitting the Dharma

To Mahakasyapa was to establish the first head of the Order
After his death, as there are not two suns in the sky
And not two kings in the state.
It was not that there were no people who were qualified to
Attain Buddhahood other than Mahakasyapa.
If there is anyone who still harbors such a mistaken idea,
I implore him to correct it at once.

The World Honored One says,
"Rely on the Dharma, not on man,
Follow the teachings of the Perfect Understanding Sutra,
Not the Imperfect Understanding Sutra."
I have looked through all the important Mahayana Sutras,
Shastras, and Seon Dharma Records,
Such as the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, the *Lotus Sutra*,
the *Surangama Sutra*, the *Complete Enlightenment Sutra*,
The Holy Teachings of Vimalakirti, the *Nirvana Sutra*, etc.;

And the Shastras of Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Asanga,
And Vasubandhu, etc.;
And the *Record of Transmission of the Lamp*, the *Zhongjing lu*,
And the *Yeomsong Seolhwa* [Stories of Meditation Songs], etc.;

But I have found not a single phrase in any Sutra or other literature
That does not allow the sentient beings of the last era
Of the illustrious teachings of the Buddha
To practice the way to achieve the Dao.

Instead of forbidding, they eagerly taught and prompted
The people and even feared that
They might not enter into the way of the Dao.
And since there is not a false word in any of these writings,
It is not a matter of small importance to overlook.
Alas! How deplorable it is to see the decline
Of the illustrious teachings on one hand,
And the heterodox ways flourishing on the other.

Even when the great Master Cheongheo's teaching was flourishing,
There was a saying,
"How can one extinguish the cart on fire
With a cup of water?"
Given this, how about in the time of the decline of the illustrious doctrine
And the heterodox ways of today?

The virtuous mind of man will be born a human

Or in the heavenly realm,
But the evil mind of man will be born a hungry ghost
Or will be cast into Hell.

Yet "the living phrase"¹⁹ of Dharma talk in the Patriarch's garden
Already knew the truth before the advent of Buddha,
And abides peacefully without regard to worldly concern
In the hall of great peace and light,
Embracing all the phenomena of the world,
Which is only the reflection of the Buddha-land
And the supreme meditation of the tranquility of the great sea.

Such are the high-minded able to attain enlightenment
In an instant and abide in peace,
But the lesser minded cannot do so.
An old master said,
"A bamboo shoot will eventually grow to be bamboo,
But to be used as material to construct a raft, it must wait."

¹⁹ *Hwalgu* (活句) are responses in Seon dialogue that reflect their origins in the pure, spontaneous mind of enlightenment. These are opposed to the dead phrase, *sagu* (死句), which may in fact be the same words, but are not rooted in actualization. Rather, they may arise from rote memory or conventional thinking.

Hence the lesser-minded should study long and hard
To attain enlightenment.

The great Seon Master Dahui also said,
"When days and months go by,
The cut stones of an embankment will fit together."

The great Master Zhaozhou also said,
"If anyone of you cannot attain enlightenment
Even after twenty and thirty years
Of strenuous practice at the temple,
I will let you have the head of this old monk."
Are the ancient sages deceiving their students?
No, of course not.

Most of the ignorant people do not understand
The truth of such words of the great Masters,
And when they hear them,
They think they are only for the high-minded,
Not for themselves, and thus they flee to find easy ways,
Such as chanting Sutras with a string of beads in their hands,
Or constructing temples and casting Buddha statues

In the hopes of attaining virtue and merit in return.

But their efforts are far from wisdom and truth.

There is a good example to illustrate this.

Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty built

Countless temples, cast numberless Buddha statues,

Performed innumerable rites,

And helped a great many monks in attaining their enlightenment.

But when he asked Bodhidharma what his merit was,

Bodhidharma's answer was, "None!"

The Sixth Patriarch Huineng said,

"Ignorant people think that practicing virtue is the way to truth."

The great Master Yongjia also said,

"Offerings of charity to the forms will create the merit

To be born in Heaven,

But as the arrow shot into empty space

Will fall back to earth when its strength wanes,

Their future life will not be smooth as they wish."

Master Guifeng also said,

"Enlightenment cannot be attained

By mere study of words and Sutras,
And the interpretation of letters and meanings
Will only increase the deluded mind of craving and anger."

The Fifth Patriarch Hongren also said,
"Keeping the original true mind is better than
Thinking of all the Buddhas in the ten directions."
All of these are the grave admonitions against the wrong practices,
Far from the right ways of Samadhi and wisdom.

The ignorant people who fall into the Three Spheres of Life
Are like children running into deep water or fire,
And deliverance of these sentient beings through the great compassion
Of the Buddha is far more kindly than the loving kindness
Of mothers to their little children.
The World Honored One says,
"I regard all sentient beings
As I regard my only begotten son, Rahula."

Thus, if we fail to attain enlightenment,
Is it not our fault, rather that the Buddha's lack of compassion?
When noble Aniruddha was rebuked by Buddha for oversleeping,

He practiced assiduously for seven days without stopping
And gained heavenly sight, even as he lost his physical sight;

And when he was rebuked by Mahakasyapa,
Noble Ananda also attained the stage of Arhat
After he practiced so hard at the Vaisali castle,
Until he was totally exhausted both bodily and spiritually.

If Buddha had helped sentient beings attain enlightenment
By miraculous power,
It would have been like pouring medicine
Into the closed mouth of the patient to treat an ailment.

That would have deprived Aniruddha and Ananda
Of their merits of all their extreme efforts.
The messages of these anecdotes show how important
One's own sincere effort and the advice of the sages are.

Hence, discipline is essential in one's cultivation
As seeds require water and earth for their growth,
And the precious stone in the dark room
Requires light to illuminate its luster.

In short, all the teachings discoursed
In the Sutras and treatises exhort us to find
A great enlightened master for instruction on
The grave decision to attain truth without delay.

For example, a temple and a butcher's shop
Have the same internal frame as a house,
But their functions of good and evil are not the same;
And the hands of a man who touched fragrant grass
And the paper that has been used to wrap fish
Smell different according to the occasion.

Hence an old master said,
"Exchange one's preference for sensual pleasure
With the preference for wise personages;"
And a venerable sage said,
"Serve your good friend as you serve your lord."
One should not take such admonitions lightly.

When I was studying the "the living phrase" of the Patriarch
At the Hall of Patriarchs in 1879,
I attained a sudden illumination.

I wanted to study with congenial friends,
But at that time, there was an epidemic spreading in the country,
Not to mention my indolence and lack of will power.
So I roved around the countryside,
Sometimes visiting fishing villages and taverns,
Resting by a creek and deep in the mountains,
Forgetting the quest that was stored away in my heart.

And then there was an agitation in the country,
And it was almost impossible to find a safe place
To hide this body of mine, let alone to study seriously.
Thus, I have wasted about twenty years of precious time.

Then I went to Haein Monastery in Hapcheon,
Carrying the Dharma staff on my shoulder,
To repay at least one millionth of the debt I owe to the Buddha.
They had just completed the Meditation Hall,
And we spent the winter studying without much progress.
Then, when we were conversing while sitting around the fire pot,
A topic popped up, about the ancient masters
Practicing with a common resolution.

As if we suddenly recollected something most precious
That has been forgotten for so long,
Our earnest wish and faith surged
Just like a newly dug spring gushing forth,
Like a newly formed mountain rising from the earth.

Deploing our much belated awareness of such an urgent matter,
We resolved to organize a group in alliance,
And I was elected leader.

Not withstanding my inability, my wayward manner,
And the unfaithfulness of my practice,
I accepted the duty without any excuse
To repay my great debt to Buddha.

What is the purpose of the compact?
It is to cultivate meditation and wisdom together,
To be born in the Tushita Heaven together,
To attain true enlightenment life after life together,
As fellow practitioners who will help those who lag behind
When someone attains enlightenment ahead of the others,
And, most of all, not to forsake our noble resolution.

If anyone is interested in our resolution and wishes to join us,
We will welcome them, whether they be a monk or a lay person,
Whether one is male or female,
Whether one is old or young,
Whether one is wise or foolish,
Whether one is noble or mean,
Whether one is friendly or aloof,
Whether one is in accord with us or against us,
Whether one is away from us or near us,
Whether one is our senior or junior.

We are all innate Buddhas with countless virtues within.
The only difference among us is that
Some did not have the chance to receive teachings
From a great enlightened Master for eons so as to be free
From the Three Spheres of Life in this realm of birth and death.

Moreover, these poor people are wandering
In a maze of transmigration like poor homeless children
Away from their native homes,
Going through countless hardships
And unbearable, heart rending pain, without any hope.

Would they not wish to be free from all these misfortunes?
With these in mind, we sincerely wish
To live a long life in the land of peace.

An old master said,
"When tastes are different, even when facing each other,
They are like lifelong rivals.
But when two Daos unite,
It is like a meeting of heaven and earth."

Since they are in unison,
There is no transmutation in the essence of emptiness
Even though myriad things display their different characteristics;
The level of the sea never rises
Even though all waters flow into it.

We sincerely hope to attain the Eye Treasury of Right Dharma
And the sublime mind of Nirvana
Through the realization of the impermanence of life
And the true nature of the world of great tranquility
By leaving all knowledge and discriminations behind.

If we could accomplish all these,
Who could say it is impossible and surrender their quest for them?
The *Inhaeng Sutra* (因行經) says,
"When the World Honored One was
The sage of keen discernment in a past life,
He spread his hair before the wet path of the Buddha Dipamkara
To which tens of millions of communities sent great applauses,
And by that occasion of their virtue
They all assembled on the Vulture Peak and attained enlightenment."

The *Thousand Causal Conditions Sutra* also says,
"The Thousand Buddha of great wisdom became the Thousand Buddha
By paying tribute to a Buddha statue,
By the vow of the great resolution,
And by demonstrating the supreme enlightened-mind
When he was a novice at the academy in the age
Of the illustrious Dharma of Bodeungyeom Thatagatha."

There are many such cases of Buddhas and Bodhisatvas
Attaining enlightenment through great resolutions.
The recent cases are those of the
Huayan Dharma teachers' resolution at Mount Lu,

The poet Bai Letien's resolution on Fragrant Mountain,
And the great Seon Master Bojo's resolution on Palgong Mountain.

The great Dharma teacher Xuanzang says,
"All the people in India have earned the karma
To be born in the Tushita Heaven
Because even if they live in the world of sensual pleasure,
It is easy for them to perform acts without losing equanimity
Wherefore they are allowed by their Dharma teachers to enjoy their
lives."

As the Pure Land of Amitabha is not easy
For the ordinary people to attain by practice,
All the old and new translations of the Sutra say
That it is the Bodhisattva who has attained the stage
Of Ten Grounds or above who may attain
The Pure Land of Sambhogakaya or the Body of Bliss.
How, then, can the lesser-minded ordinary people
Attain rebirth in the Pure Land?

This is the reason why it is not allowed in the Hinayana,
While the Mahayana permits it,

And the reason that the great Dharma teacher Xuanzang,²⁰
Who wished to be reborn in the Tushita Heaven for all his life,
Expressed on his deathbed his wish to be reborn in the
Pure Land of Amitabha and offered the following stanza:

I duly take refuge in the supreme Enlightenment
Of Maitreya Thatagatha,
And my wish is for all sentient beings
To be reborn in the Pure Land of Compassionate Amitabha.

I also sincerely wish that all sentient beings
Who take refuge in Amitabha
Be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha
When their lives on this earth come to an end.

The great Dharma teacher Xuanzang is a renowned master
Who is well versed in the Dharma without any error or deceit,
And there are too many sages recorded in the life stories
Of venerables and the ancient and recent ages

²⁰ Master Xuanzang (玄奘) (600-664) was a Chinese monk renowned for bringing hundreds of texts back to China from his 17 year trip in India. As such, he is one of the most important figures in the history of scholastic East Asian Buddhism.

To recount who has been reborn in the Tushita Heaven.

Asanga and Vasubandhu also wished to be born

In the Tushita Heaven,

And so what we have to do is to have faith in the Dharma.

There could be differences among people whether they wish

To be born in the Pure Land or in the Tushita Heaven

According to one's circumstances,

But who does not wish to be born in either of these Lands of Bliss?

It is like comparing white jade and pure gold,

Both of which are most valuable.

It is also like comparing the fragrance of a spring orchid

With that of an autumn chrysanthemum.

Hence, one should not discriminate

Which is easier or more difficult,

Which is right or wrong,

Or fall into discrimination between you and me, or this and that.

The same applies to our compact.

There could not be any differences in our wishes for rebirth,
Whether one has joined our group before others or afterwards.

How wonderful it would be for the unenlightened ones
To rely on such a resolution and to be reborn in the palace
Of Tushita Heaven and then to attain enlightenment through
Listening to the sublime discourse
Of Amitabha so as to deliver all sentient beings.

I sincerely ask all practitioners to take heed
With great resolution, to the discourses of the present age
No less than the teachings of old,
And join our compact to create a great karmic relation.

Regarding the other disciplines of everyday life,
I will not discuss them in detail
Because they are all written in the Sutras.

An old master said,
"One may practice in all sorts of ways
But the most important thing is to be free from false thought."
This is the most vital point of practice,

And one should not be too extreme or too relaxed.

Alas! Once we lose our body,

It is almost impossible to be reborn a human being again for eons.

Where are all the heroes of the past now?

A warning verse from an old master:

"One should not seek glorious fame, wealth, or prosperity.

Simply live a carefree life in accordance with one's conditions."

Once we are gone, where do we find the master of ourselves?

One hundred years after we are gone,

There will be nothing but the name of this body.

When garments get tattered, mend them again and again,

And when provisions are gone, go out and beg for food.

How much time have we wasted

To sustain this bag of bones, wandering in illusion?"

A verse on this doleful world from a venerable sage:

"To dwell on affairs already passed,

Is but endless anxiety.

Those once so dear and intimate to us
Have turned into handfuls of earth.

The golden palace of the Emperor of Han
Is now buried in dust,
And only lonesome water now flows
In the golden valley of an ancient man of wealth.

Time flies and morning is already evening,
We see green plants of spring, then it is already autumn.
If you have not done even a tiny bit of good in this life,
What would you expect to have in return in the nether world?"

The old master speaks again,
Urging the people to practice:
"If one cannot exhale the breath that one has taken in,
That is the end of life, and no grief-stricken son
Can stop the last journey of the deceased;
And no matter how numerous the relatives are,
No one can take the place of the departed on that final journey.

The body will be burned in the flame of fire,

Or buried in a remote rugged mountain
With a vain stone monument
And a bank note hanging on the branch of a willow tree
As traveling fare for the long journey of the deceased.
Only dropping tears from the forlorn eyes
And a chilly wind see off the deceased.
Who can avoid this last journey of humankind?
Beware! And reflect on yourself!
What else is there to believe than the teachings of the Buddha?
How deplorable it is that there is no other way
To practice in order to be reborn a human being."

One should re-examine the resolutions of this compact,
Take them to heart,
And then practice them with all one's zeal
Like extinguishing the burning fire on one's own forehead,
Never wasting time,
Never minding what one sees or hears.

If anyone takes them lightly, merely passing them over,
Or overlooks any, like two rivals who ignore each other,
That would be like a patient who has no concern in finding a doctor,

Or someone who is hungry refusing a meal.
There is no way to save such a person.
If there is anyone who truly wishes to keep our resolution
And practice the everlasting truth of Buddha's teaching,
Such that one can be born in the palace of the Tushita Heaven,
One should be earnest and waste no time
Finding a great enlightened master.

Because of my untrained writing and my lack of wisdom,
I was unable to express everything in words.
Yet I humbly pray in conjunction of this fortunate meeting
For the long life of His Majesty the Emperor,²¹
For an abundance of crops year after year, with great fortune,
For everlasting peace on earth without war,
And for the sublime enlightenment of all sentient beings
Through the right teachings of Buddha.

Bhikku Gyeongheo and all the members of this resolution
Take refuge in our lord Buddha,
And implore in prostration to the Three Jewels of the

²¹ This line has been deleted in the 1943 edition, probably by the censure of the Japanese colonial government during World War II.

Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha
That pervade the whole universe
To protect us with great compassion
For the speedy success of our great resolution.

November 1, 1899
Bhikku Gyeong-heo, Leader of the Resolution
With prostrations and an offering of incense

Rules and Regulations of the Resolution for Meditation and Supreme Wisdom:

1. Our impermanent life is fleeting fast and there is nothing graver than the matter of birth and death. One should then practice meditation and wisdom without negligence.

If anyone wishes to attain Buddhahood without practicing meditation, wisdom, and diligence, it would be like going backward instead of forward, or heading for the East while one is wishing to go West.

One should not ruin one's life by being attached to any conditioned thing that arises, abides, decays, and then ceases to be.

2. If one has practiced meditation and supreme wisdom properly and

has decided the direction of the way, one should visit a great enlightened master, wasting no time or energy.

3. Since times of old, all who wish to attain Buddhahood and perform the ways of a Bodhisattva should first perform good karmic actions and then practice meditation and supreme wisdom in order to be born in the palace of Tushita Heaven and attain Buddhahood.

4. If one has already joined our compact, one should practice meditation and wisdom without delay, without thinking about birth in the Tushita Heaven. Great resolution without practice is vainglorious and has no merit.

5. For those who will be accepted as a member of our compact, even if they do not wish to be born in the Tushita Heaven, they must truly practice meditation and supreme wisdom without negligence. Such a good practitioner will also be accepted even if they wish to be reborn in the Pure Land of Bliss.

6. The aim of this resolution is for members to practice together. Hence, unless there is a good excuse, one should practice with the group in one place.

7. However, if one's resolution is firm enough to practice meditation and supreme wisdom in earnest, one is allowed to practice alone, separate from other members.

8. Regardless of one's progress in practice, in the case of inevitable circumstances, one may be excused from the group practice.

9. Those who join the compact afterwards should write their names and addresses and their own resolutions in the book of the compact.

10. As it has not been announced anywhere else beforehand, the place of the declaration of the resolution of the compact is to be Haein Monastery, and all letters will be sent to the addresses of the members as recorded in this book for their convenience.

11. Each member should strive hard, and if there is anyone who has achieved enlightenment before the others, the awakened should assist others who have not attained their goals. Yet one should not rely too heavily on others. Such personages should not have joined the group in the first place. One should not deceive oneself. How can one achieve the Dao in that manner? A person with such a mind should not join the group.

12. A person whose mind and behaviors are not modest, a person who has committed a grave crime, or has an incurable disease should not be accepted, because they could be detrimental to the community.

13. Anyone who has different views about the idea and conduct of the compact should not be accepted.

14. It is not a matter of small importance to decide and join the compact. If there is anyone who has fallen into the realm of the Three Evil Paths, or fallen into the hands of the devils or the "outside way," those who already have attained enlightenment should lead them back to the right track. Such goodwill will be more gracious than the love of parents for their children, or more intimate than the love of brothers, because how can anyone do more than deliver one from death?

15. A firm resolution to be born in the Tushita Heaven in the hopes of meeting Amitabha can be comparable to the longing of parents for a good son who is far away from home for the duty of his country.

Sincere chanting of the Buddha's name is the constant earnest mind, not an occasional prayer for a special occasion. In such a case, counting a string of beads is subsidiary.

One should not chant the name of Buddha in confusion, in which case even counting the string of beads would not be of any help.

Offerings to the Buddha, i.e., burning incense, offering tea, offering a bowl of rice—are all forms of worship. What is important is not the forms but rather the ardent mind.

16. The members agreeing to this resolution may assemble at a convenient time and place to practice, regardless of the number of practitioners, but the members should not practice alone in the mountains. This is because if such a person gets ill and dies, one not only loses the chance of attaining enlightenment, but without the help of the fellow practitioners, it is feared that one may also lose the chance to preserve the merits one has already attained and lose everything.

It is imperative that all members should help one another. What is feared is that there might be quite a number of members who will die wandering in all directions around the country alone. If any such a thing happens, we would have to travel all over the country with great difficulties, crossing countless rivers and climbing countless mountains to help them. It is almost impossible, not to mention the expenses to be incurred.

If we do not look after and save them, it is not only against the will of our resolution but also will invite the criticism of the people. Hence one should practice in one place together with the fellow practitioners, regardless of the number. As it is not a matter of small importance, one should strictly observe this rule. Otherwise one should not join the group.

17. There is no way to escape death, and if any member nearby gets sick or dies, one should help the member with great care. One should also console the unfortunate member with the chanting of the Song of the Transience of Life, a discourse on the true meaning of meditation and wisdom, and a discourse on the resolution for rebirth in the Tushita Heaven, and then help the member to not lose spirit and the hope of rebirth in Tushita Heaven, the heavenly realm where happiness abounds.

18. If anyone happens to be at the deathbed of another member, observe the rites of offerings to Amitabha and to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha in the ten directions, and then pray for the happiness on the departed in the other world without much extravagance.

19. When a member dies, it must be reported to the office of the Compact with the records of the precise date and cause of death. Upon receiving the information, the office should send the news to all other

members, but should not take the trouble of traveling a long distance solely for this purpose.

When members receive such news, even though they may be thousands of miles away, they should, in groups of two to three, or ten to twenty, or even one hundred, in regard of the resolution of the Compact, observe the rite for the deceased with all formality according to their means, including such rites as offerings to Amitabha Thatagatha, and to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

They should also record all the names of the participants of the rite, regardless of the number, even though it amounts to hundreds. All the participants of the rite should pay tribute to and pray for the deceased to be born in the palace of Tushita Heaven. This rite must also be performed on the second and third anniversaries of the death.

20. Q: "What is the purpose of organizing the Compact and praying for one to be born in Tushita Heaven?"

A: It is organized for those who have not yet attained the power of meditation and wisdom. So those who have attained the power of meditation and wisdom and are free of any hindrance do not have to rely

on the power of the resolution.

Even those who have attained great power might still have some wishes, and there is no harm for them to make resolutions. That is the reason that they wish to be born in Tushita Heaven."

Q: "You have already organized the Resolution of the Compact to be born in Tushita Heaven. Then why it is allowed to wish to be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha again?"

A: "We allow them to wish to be born in the Pure Land of Amitabha because there is, in fact, no difference between organizing the Resolution of the Compact to be born in the Tushita Heaven or in the Pure Land of Amitabha through cultivation of meditation and wisdom. If one is truly cultivating meditation and wisdom, how could one think of the difference between the rebirth in Tushita Heaven and in the Pure Land of Amitabha?"

Q: "But the resolution mentions only rebirth in Tushita Heaven, and there is no mention about the rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitabha. What is the reason?"

A: "It is easier to be born in Tushita Heaven than to be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha. Yet they are in the same sphere of desire and their spirits are in resonance with each other."

Q: "In the other literature behooving our cultivation, it says it is easier to be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha than to be born in Tushita Heaven. Does this not contradict your explanation?"

A: "There is a profound meaning in those interpretations, and the only difference in them is the difference of emphasis, not in their essential quality. If you look up the Sutras, treatises, and the tracts of Masters, you would find many such cases, such as, "There is no comparison in the attainment of awakening through a mantra"; "In the study of Buddha, there is no comparison to the recitation of Sutra"; or "There is no greater merit than to cast the statue of a Buddha, to construct pagodas, and to make offerings." These did not spare any undue praise enumerating all kinds of conduct. But one should keep in mind that it does not mean that only a certain way is right and the others are not right. This is what we call 'an artful libratory technique' to teach the people for their benefit, according to their ability. "

Hence the Sutra says, "There is no fixed way in the teachings of

Buddha, and it is called Anuttara-samyaksambodhi or the Consummation of Incomparable Enlightenment." It also says, "Buddha never lies but he sometimes deceives the people for their benefit."

Q: "Does that mean, then, that what the Rules of Discipline in this Resolution of the Compact says about rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitabha is all true?"

A: "Rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitabha is allowed for the people who made a vow of firm resolution to be reborn there, but how can it be the same for those who are born in Tushita Heaven and then reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha after one's awakening? It is to prevent any mistake that one might commit in the Pure Land of Amitabha. If one is able to be reborn in the Pure Land of Amitabha directly, that is a rare case. But what is wrong with that? I might as well follow his example. But be careful not to regret when one comes to the final moment of one's life."

21. Transfer your merit that you have achieved in this life, however small that might be, to your fellow practitioners so as to attain Buddhahood together.

22. Q: "What is the proper way for an enlightened one, whose only

property is this resolution, to transfer merit to fellow members, without causing any detriment to the great power of the vow to save all sentient beings?"

A: "The resolution of the fellow members in attaining enlightenment is to deliver all sentient beings. An old master said, 'Unless one can free oneself from one's own shackle, how can one free others from their shackles? There is no other way to transfer one's merit to all sentient beings.'"

23. Anyone who can exhort and teach others shall take a copy of this resolution and propagate it far and wide so that others may join us. When copying the text, one should be very careful not to make any error, such as dropping words, writing unclear phrases, or disrupting sentences, etc., such that it can be readable and there will be no inconveniences in teaching.

24. So brief is our life that no one can guarantee tomorrow, and so too are the lives of our members. Therefore, I truly implore for posterity's sake that no one forgets the meaning behind establishing this compact, and that it be propagated far and wide forever, so as to deliver all sentient beings from the delusion of darkness.

25. If there is anyone who wishes to join us, one should read these rules and regulations, in addition to the proclamation of our resolution, very carefully, and those who have already joined us should teach the newcomers kindly, so that they can cultivate the right teachings of the Buddha without confusion.

26. During our joint study in the summer and winter seasons, one who is well versed in letters and the main ideas of these rules and regulations, together with the proclamation of our resolution, should explain this all to the assembly, so that all newcomers and those who do not know the letter might not get confused.

27. Even if there are some parts in the rules and regulations and the proclamation that are not in accordance with the idea of some people, do not argue with them, understanding that they are designed for the use of our members.

28. These rules and regulations are solely for the use of the members of our compact. In regards to the proper conduct for other disciplines, confer with the Sutras, where every detail is clearly manifested.

29. Besides these rules and regulations, there were supplementary

details for practical use, but they are excluded here because we feared that it might not be appropriate for the establishment of the compact, and have thus decided to wait for the later days to enact them when the tradition of meditation will be more flourishing.

However, it will be enacted and published for practical use in due time, with the consultation of the members who are reasonable and well acquainted with the leader.

30. Lastly, every member should observe these rules and regulations, should not be indulgent, and most of all, should endeavor to achieve perfection of self for the benefit of others.



The Bylaws for Providing Provisions at Cheoneun Temple in Namwon

Buddha means awakening, realizing the pure self-nature,
And then cultivating its sublime nature to attain
The stage of enlightenment that will bring countless virtues,
As many as the sands of the Ganges River.

If one sincerely prays, one's devotion would be realized
Like the reflection of the moonlight in the water,
Like the spreading of an echo in the valley,
Which will not only deliver all sentient beings
But also bring one's own rebirth in the Pure Land of Bliss.

The site of this temple is famous for its beauty from old,

And so are the Buddha statues and the scroll paintings
Of the guardians of the Flower Adornment Sutra
Which are supposed to have miraculous effects
Of boundless compassion and wisdom, seldom found elsewhere.

Two officials in the town office made a great vow
To establish a pact providing provisions for the monks,
Offering incense and other bestowments to the Buddha,
And praying every day of the month.
All these brought the fruits of preventing
Calamities in the households, and
Many happy events, thriving unto posterity.

One might not be aware of the causes of all this good fortune at first,
But eventually, the wise will come to realize the truth of all these.
Besides all these fortunes,
They can also be sure of their rebirth in the Land of Utmost Bliss.
When I stopped by the temple on my journey from the south,
Elder Chunmyeong asked me to write
A letter of promotion of virtue,
And I accepted his request with great pleasure.

Late November, 1867

Gyeongheo

On the way back to the southwestern region



A Letter Encouraging Charity for the Restoration of Songgye Hermitage on Mount Deogyu

I wrote a letter promoting the virtue of restoring Baekjang Hermitage
At Silsang-sa Monastery in late February,
And it has been some time now since
I have arrived here at Songgye Monastery.

I have written quite a few letters,
Of which there are many styles:
A letter written in the mood of exultation,
A letter written in the mood of desolation,
A letter written in the mood of despondency,
A letter written in the mood of longing,
A letter written in a pleasant and leisurely mood,

And a letter written in an extremely gloomy mood.
There may be many more cases,
But no other cases could have been more lamentable
Than those for which I've written for these two monasteries.

Buddha says,
"The fire of impermanence burns the whole world,"
And says again,
"The disturbance of the Three Spheres of Life is like
A house on fire."
But no one seems to heed these words, to feel sad, and awaken.

A venerable sage said,
"Birth, old age, sickness, and then death;
Spring, Summer, Fall, and then Winter;
Abiding, destruction, and then to emptiness;
All these arise from the mechanism of the mind
Of arising, abiding, transmutation, and then extinction.

If mind abides in true reality,
There would be no self-transmutation akin to
The scales of snake and the wings of cicada. "

As in the case of a great calamity by fire,
Or the digging of the Kunming reservoir by the Emperor of Han,
Even the universe sometimes cannot escape
From great disasters.

How then can we be sure of the safety
Of the observation tower of the Palace of Bliss
And the palace of the Golden Phoenix and Jade Dragon?
What is the difference between these grand structures
And the thatched small cottages and anthills?

How then can we compare a dugout hut
In a mountain or a shabby village?
There is nothing to either vex
Or be happy about in losing and gaining.

There is no reference to trace the history of this monastery,
But according to the local legend,
It was constructed during the ancient past of the Silla Dynasty.

When all the great elders such as Mungok
And Yeokam were discoursing on the Sutra,

There were students filling the Dharma Hall,
But recently it was not as it used to be,
And then fire broke out and burned down the monastery.

What a misfortune it is!
Yet there is a saying,
"Misfortune turns out to be a blessing."
Is it then a sign of good fortune?

The sky is too high to reach,
But there will be rewards of felicitous events
And good fortune for good conduct.

The sacred writings of both Confucianism
And Buddhism state in detail that the reward for charity
Will be rebirth in the human and heavenly realm,
And there is no reason to doubt the sacred writings.

I was sleeping in the Spiritual Master's room
And awakened from a deep spring dream
By the noisy songs of birds
To find the butterflies flying all over

And myself to be the empty body of delusion.

I also awoke to find the petals of apricot trees
Falling down in the front yard in the breeze,
And the green grass wet with rainfall
Indicating that it is already late Spring.

As the fragrant smoke of incense
Soars up like the twirling vine of arrowroot,
I write this letter to promote virtue
In the vein of the propitious occasion.



Preface to the Pact for Preparation of the Shroud

I just came down from the meditation hall of Haein Monastery
And was sitting by the fire pot at the Pavilion of Sutras
Caressing my knee.

When one gets old, one can sense
Whether it will be soon be raining or not.
When one gets ill, one is sensitive to cold and warmth,
Indicating that one has become about seventy percent the dry ash of death
And 100 percent dry wood.
What else could one do other than caress the knees?
I even forgot to climb the noted mountain to collect medicinal herbs.

The novice who was attending to me was named Dujeong.

He came to me with a book and said,
"We wish to establish a fraternity to prepare
The clothes for your funeral use,
And we are hoping that you would write a preface to our pact."

It was very kind of them.
Ancient sages say, "Look after elders with all your devotion
While they are alive, and when they die,
Conduct the funeral with great devotion and formality,
And in attendance, one's grief must be sincere."

But there are very few who know the rites.
These days, there are many practitioners
Who are indifferent to their teachers.

They regard their teachers as itinerants.
I not only have heard such stories
But have also witnessed many such instances myself,
Filling me with a long lasting sadness.

Even if one's parents bore one's body,
If it were not for the teachings of the masters,

How one could expect the personality one has cultivated today?

Great is the debt to the teachers.

Pay respects when they are alive,

And when they pass away,

Show condolences and perform the due rites.

An old master said,

"The principle of courtesy is reverence.

Jade and silk are subsidiary and not worth mentioning."

Hence, founding a compact to help one another

Must have great meaning,

Which is also one of the beautiful teachings of moderation

From the old masters.

But there is one more thing we should keep in mind.

Namely, what is this thing that happened to come into being,

What is the look of this thing that happened to be,

What is this thing that will be no more when the time comes

And then how will that thing come to look?

Alas!

They worship and deplore all day,
But what is that thing that worships and deplores all day?
We come to this world and then will be gone,
But, in the ultimate sense,
There was never coming or going.
That is our true "original face," our original self.

One should think twice about birth and death,
Worship and grief, before their life ends up wasted.

An old master said,
"Truly, there is nothing that is more important
Than the matter of birth and death."

"Is it not true?" I asked Dujong, my attendant.
He then stood up, joining his palms, and said,
"Would I be able to overcome the problems
Of worship and grief, birth and death,
If I practiced to know what my 'original face' is?"
I said to him, "If you really try hard,
You would realize that there is neither center nor periphery,
Neither good nor bad. Wouldn't that be wonderful?"

Then I accepted his request to write the preface.

At the end of 1900
An ailing Monk Gyeongheo
In the midst of rambling Samadhi



Preface to the List of General Managers at Beomeo Monastery²²

As I am very particular, lazy, and useless in this world,
Besides my constitutional infirmity,
I lived the life of a recluse
In the countryside of the southwest,
When I was visited by rambling guests from all directions.

When the guest said, "If you want to take a rambling tour,
You should visit the finest mountains of Geumgang,
Duryu, Gaya, and Odae,"
I laughed and said, "What is the use of fine mountains
And waters for the true Rambler?"

²² This Preface is a newly found manuscript, first published in this collection.

What was his response?

He was just dumfounded, left speechless.

I had a guilty feeling for neglecting the duty
Of practicing the truth and hiding in the mundane world.
So I set out, in shabby clothes and with a Dharma staff,
Relinquishing every tiny bit of business,
To enjoy for myself the fine scenery of nature.

I spent winter and summer of that year
In the Bulmyeong and Gaya mountains,
And then arrived at Beomeo Monastery
On my feeble legs that next summer.

At that time, Elder Hoihyeon was residing
In the Cheongpung Hall.
His manner was noble and fine in every way,
His scholarship and writings were also first-rate and graceful.

We spent a pleasant time together for several months.
He was very agreeable, and one day when I asked him,
"What is your official duty in this temple?"

He said his duty in this temple was Chief Patriarch
Appointed by the decree of the King.
There was a niche where tablets of King Ikjong
And Her Majesty Queen Sinjeong were enshrined,
And it was the Chief Patriarch's duty to observe the ceremony
Of the birthdays and the memorial services for the King and the Queen.

It must have been due to the fine landscape of Geumjeong Mountain
Where this famous temple is located
That the tablets of the King and the Queen were enshrined here.

Besides the title of Chief Patriarch,
There were five more honorable high government official titles
That went along with this official Buddhist title,
And the term of the office was for two years.

The duty of this position appointed by the royal court
Was so important that it was not easy to perform.
It also brought great prestige to the temple, such that
The temple is sometimes called by a special title
Instead of its original name.

Such was the enormous responsibility of the office
That the regulations regarding the selection
Of Chief Patriarch were also voluminous.
It was my wish to circulate his name far and wide,
But while writing the preface, I want to make a connection
Between this and my reasons for going on my rambling tour.

If we can talk about the sky and the bush,
The peak of the mountain, every tree, and every piece of stone,
What is the use of talking about the fine beauty
Of the mountains of Gaya, Odae, Geumgang, and Duryu?

The small hills and the feet of the mountains
Also have sublime beauties of their own,
And do not the mountains of Gaya, Odae, Geumgang,
And Duryu also have their small hills and feet?

There are no mountains that do not have
Small hills and feet.
It means that there is nowhere there is not as beautiful as Gaya,
Odae, Geumgang, and the Duryu mountains.

Why then does one waste time
Traveling hundreds of miles with a sack of food on the back,
Fatiguing oneself with sore feet?

Therefore, the rambling ways of the ancient people are not mine,
And if what the ramblers of old had in mind was
Only seeking fine landscapes, that is not mine either.
Who then can follow my way
Of rambling and seeking for the fine landscapes?
If there is anyone who can follow my way,
He would be the one who is qualified to assume the duty
Of the Chief Patriarch and protect the shrine of the King's tablet.

An old master said,
"The intention of any work is entirely up to the person who does it,"
And he said again,
"The Dao or truth pervades far and wide by means of men."
Are they not true?

The following is what Elder Hoihyeon said to me,
"Once I read Sima's record of supplication to the King,
And it says in part that,

If we leave the supplicant's name engraved in stone,
The people of the later time would discuss the loyalty
And righteousness, or disgrace and dishonesty of that person.

In the same way, if we leave the names of the officials in a letter,
The people of the later time would discuss
Their duties as either well or badly done.
Wouldn't that be a good warning for later people
In charge of their office to perform their duties more faithfully,
And also a good warning in selecting a person for office?

If the rules are specified in the preface,
Wouldn't that also be of great benefit in protecting the temple?"

I liked what he said very much,
And without second thought, I said to him,
"I do not think I have to write any rules of discipline
Because what you have just said was fair enough."
So here it is.

Early April, 1900
Bhikku Seong-u Gyeongheo
On the way back to the southwestern region

III. The Records of Letters



The Record of the Construction of the Meditation Hall at Haein Monastery on Mt. Gaya, Hapcheon County

I love to ramble around amidst the fine scenery of nature,
And this great Haein Monastery on Mt. Gaya,
Hapcheon County, built by a Patriarch,
Is where Daoist sages took leave of their lives
After enjoying their lives as hermits,
And where the complete collection of Buddhist Sutras,
Laws, and Treatises were engraved
By the great vows of the Kings of the nether and mundane worlds.

I had not been to this temple before,
Then I suddenly decided to visit here last fall.

It was so pleasant that I almost forgot
To look around, inspect the Sutras,
And trace the marks of the Daoist hermits in the Hongnyudong gorge.

One day I was told by a Seon Practitioner that the grace
Of the Emperor has extended even to this temple,
Granting the printing of the great Sutras,
Renovating the Dharma Halls and Pavilions,
In addition to constructing the Meditation Hall
Where practitioners can practice without any inconvenience.
It is the very example of the ancient saints
Who built a prosperous country by helping the people.

Thanks to the hard works of Superintendent Beomun,
And other monks in the temple,
We had an inauguration ceremony at the Meditation Hall,
Which took five months to construct beginning last May,
And he asked me to write a record of the construction,
To let posterity know the history of the Hall.

I said to him, "It is not right," and declined the request.
But the Seon Practitioner had a different idea:

"Shakyamuni Buddha transmitted the Eye Treasury
Of Right Dharma to Mahakasyapa down to Bodhidharma,
Then to China, to Master Shiwu,
From Shiwu to Master Taego in our country,
From Taego to Cheongheo, who is the 63rd lineal Dharma disciple
Of Shakyamuni Buddha.

At that time, attaining enlightenment and becoming a Dharma teacher
Was not limited to the monks in the mountain.
It was wide open, from the Emperor to the prince,
To the nobles, and even to the sages and scholars
Living lives of recluses in the mundane world,
And every one of them attained the ultimate truth
Of no birth and death, and was able to bid adieu
To the world in either a sitting or standing position
When the time of their death arrived.

They sought the great Masters to attain enlightenment,
As a starving man seeks food,
As a thirsty man seeks water, and no one could stop them.

However, the people these days regard

The illustrious Dharma as a clump of earth,
Regard the incomparable wisdom as a child's toy.
They even antagonize or become jealous of each other.
There is no end to the enumeration of such things.

Alas!

Where will posterity search to find a master
To learn the Eye Treasury of Right Dharma?
Hence, the construction of the Mediation Hall at such a time is
Like the emergence of a lotus flower amidst a raging fire,
And it is very important to record the true history
Of the Hall for posterity."

Yet I declined again, saying, "It is not right."
Still the Seon Practitioner was adamant and implored again:
"The Eye Treasury of Right Dharma is
The supreme wisdom of Buddha, and the construction
Of the Meditation Hall is the decree of the Emperor.

If we do not follow the Buddha's teaching and the Emperor's decree,
The temple might be closed or some misfortune might fall upon us.
Then how could one escape the reprimand?

And the punishment of the Eight Heavenly Guardians?

It is also against the proper way of righteous man to decline.

Should we not then take heed and guard ourselves?

If we do not record the history of the construction

Of the Meditation Hall in detail,

How will posterity know and revere the earnest intent

Of the construction of the Hall?

Hence it is, I think, quite proper for you to accept my request."

Yet, I still declined and said to him sternly:

"Your view is too narrow-minded.

Do you not see that no record is a better record?

As of yet, there is not a soul who has attended meditation practice here,

So how do they know that myriad sentient beings

Have attained enlightenment in an instant;

And not a soul has heard a single *hwadu* or *gong-an*²³ as yet,

²³ *Gong-an* (公案) (Jp: *koan*; Ch: *gongan*) are longer cases used as the focus of meditative absorption. *Hwadu* (Jp: *watō*; Ch: *huatou*) are short fragments that often surmise the crux of the *gong-an*.

Then how do they know that heaven and earth,
Light and dark, form and emptiness, a tiny thread
And a thick bamboo stick have all issued illumination in an instant;

And how do they know that the erection
Of the Meditation Hall has been completed
Even before the foundation has been constructed;

And how do they know that all the details of the story
Of construction were recorded
Even before the sign board has been put up?

This is the true picture of the present situation.
Then how can we defile the Meditation Hall
That seeks the Eye Treasury of Right Dharma
With paper and ink?"

The Seon Practitioner was ashamed of himself
And as he withdrew, said:
"Your teaching has proved that all my studies have been in vain.
Would you kindly tell me what
The true Eye Treasury of Right Dharma is?"

I said to him, "This is it."

"What do you mean by 'This is it'?"

I said to him,

"The light of Mt. Gaya has stuck blue in the sky."

I kept silent for a moment, then said:

"Even if you understood the meaning of what you have heard,

That is only the reflection of your mind.

Even if you had a complete understanding of the phrase,

That is like an arrow that has already vanished into the western sky,

And it is like putting a head on the top of a head,

Or like trying to live by cutting one's head off.

Tell me now.

In this situation, how would you practice meditation?

'Hal!'²⁴

Today, I have wasted time chasing the shadow of the sun,

And forgot to forget the mass of my body."

²⁴ Beginning with the Chan tradition in China, one method of communicating the state of enlightened mind was through a sudden shout. In Korean, this is rendered as *hal*.

When the Seon Practitioner implored me to write down
The things I have said without forgetting a single word,
I could not but forego the conflict of my mind
And find an end to the thread of the story I've told here
And write the record of the construction of the Meditation Hall.

Late September, 1866
Bhikku Gyeongheo
On the way back to the southwestern region



The Record of the Construction of Gyemyeong Hermitage at Beomeo Monastery

The record of the Temple shows that

A monastery five-kan²⁵ wide was built called Gyemyeong Bang,

Meaning the cock crowing room,

On the top of the hill on the eastern mountain.

And according to the local legend,

The crowing of the cock was heard from the monastery.

There is a fossil of the cock and its footprint

On the top of the hill on the eastern mountain,

And this is how this monastery

²⁵ Kan are traditional Korean units for measuring buildings, referring to the space between two pillars.

Has come to take on the name of the crowing cock.
Elder Uhwa and his disciples,
The Dharma teacher Honhae and the noble teacher Geumbong,
Made a great vow to reconstruct the five-kan Gyemyeong Hermitage
At its original site.

It took eight months to complete,
And they enshrined paintings of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
Four years later, in 1836, they built the Great Dipper Shrine
And a four-room residential building,
And then enshrined the paintings of the sages of the Big Dipper,
The Solitary Awakened One, and the Mountain Spirit.

But owing to the heavy load of the work at the monastery,
They did not have time to record
The history of these constructions until now.

When I came down to the south and stayed at Geumgang Hermitage,
I was requested by Abbot Seongwol to take on the job
Of writing the record of the history of the monastery
So that it can be transmitted to posterity:

"The tradition of the Seon clan is to illuminate
The penetrating eyes by cutting off the head of wood
With the dry shit stick and to command with the divine sword.
Infinitude is the realm of Buddha,
And the universe is filled by a cloudlike pavilion of great treasure.

Then what is the use of building halls of bricks and wood,
And paint them with all kinds of fancy colors?
What too is the use of striking bells and beating drums?

Alas!

Isn't the great reverence for building temples and stupas
The sign of the decline of the illustrious Dharma?"

When I got this far with my writing, sighing repeatedly in desolation,
Someone next to me got furious and said,
"You are degrading the cloudlike pavilion of great treasure,
The lotus flower, and the great halls
While praising the dry shit stick
And the wood head that has been cut off."

I said to him, "You are narrow-minded.

Would the Governor of She²⁶ judge the monkeys
By their mirth and displeasure?
Just lament over your not having
The divine sword and the penetrating eyes.

There are infinite seas of Dharma even in the dry shit stick
And the head of the wood that has been cut off.
Then how would that be in the construction of
The undefiled Dharma Hall at the site of the heavenly cock,
Painting the statue of Buddha,
Offering incense and lighting candles to the Buddha,
Striking the bells and drums for the good sons and daughters,
To uphold the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
So that they earn the good causal conditions,
Leaving the mundane world behind?

The good roots of the benefactors as well as
The merits and virtues of all Bodhisattvas
Would be as the countless sands of the Ganges River.

²⁶ Shen Zhu Liang (沈諸梁), better known as Governor of Ye (葉), is best remembered for his part in putting down the rebellion of Po Kung Sheng (白公勝), the grandson of King Ping of Zhou (周平王) in 479 BCE.

If there is anyone who has attained supreme enlightenment,
That person is the Honhae Dharma teacher.
It is worthy of him to attain a complete understanding
Of the teachings of his master."

He was very pleased and thanked me, saying,
"What you have just said was excellent!"
I was very pleased, too, and put down the writing brush,
And, after having tea, composed a verse:

What is truly beautiful to show?
I happened to find a well-shaped unfinished earthen bowl.
I have hidden a giggle in the newly cut hole
Of the cock crowing rock.
One day there will be a great thunder in the sky.

Late spring, 1903
Gyeongheo Seong-u



The Record of the Construction of Gyemyeong Hermitage at Beomeo Monastery in Mt. Geumjeong, Dongnae County

The *Flower Adornment Sutra* says,

"The vital element of a Mahabodhisattva is

Great love and compassion in addition to great joy and equanimity,"

And it also says,

"The essence of all phenomena is equanimity."

The Seon Master Simmunbun said,

"The great preceptor Dongshan teaches that

If one could penetrate into the infinitude of the sublime fire

By the subtlety of thoughtlessness,
One might return to the fountain-head beyond thought."
Now, what does that mean?
If we could reach beyond the realm of thoughtlessness,
Where do we find the folly of learning?

There is no man of thinking
Or man of learning to be found there;
They are all completely naked.
They could not even find their own origination.

How then is it possible to contaminate anyone
With blustery arguments?
How is it possible to make anyone happy or angry
With irritation or brown nosing?

Thus, one should leave the two relative realms
Of light and darkness behind
And head for where it is neither light nor dark,
And then wait for the news of the ceremony
At the Hall of Great Compassion
To find out the cause and resolution.

Thus, if there is anyone who could penetrate mountains,
Rivers, and the earth with a single eye
That cuts through the heaven like a long sable,
Who can compete with sneaking eyes?
One must have such a likeness to associate, play,
And walk with sages arm in arm, to accomplish
The firm resolution of compassion and wisdom.

The incomparable Dharma lessons beneficial for everyone
Also come from such firm resolution,
Not from any other way, and this is also where we should abide.

When the Seon Master Seongwol was asked by Elder Honhae
To assume the duty of abbot of the Gyemyeong Hermitage,
He constructed the monastery with the help of the community,
And then secured about one and a half acres of rice paddy
From the local villages and monasteries,
In addition to about one and a half acres of paddies
Secured with the help of Monks Honhae, Seongwol,
Damhae, Hwawol, and female devotees of Lee Bohyeon-hwa
And Kim Jimyeong-hwa who collected
A great sum of money to contribute.

A female devotee, Kim Gaksim, also contributed.
Thus, the total acreage amounted to about three acres.
These contributions must be used for the sole purpose
Of the community of the monastery and not for any other purpose,
And this principle must be kept forevermore.
Mysterious are the virtuous merits, faith,
And power of vow of the monks in the mountains
And the devotees in the mundane world.

Yet greater is the virtuous merit of the Seon Master Seongwol
Who showed an example of exulting virtue
And provided for the needs of the temple
Wherewith the numberless men and women from all directions
Visited the monastery to practice ardently together.
Is it not an ideal place in which to abide?

Are the three abiding places mentioned above the same?
If they are not the same,
Were there ever things that were once the same?
If they are the same,
Were there ever things that were once not the same?

It is like saying that bull horns are not in demand,
And there is a great demand for rabbit horns
But there is no way to get them.
Now, tell me, is this reasonable?

An old master said,
"If one's eyes are not awakened,
Even a drop of water could not be swallowed."

Hence everyone who studies at this monastery
Should follow the examples of Master Ciming
Who punctured his thigh with a sharp point
To prevent himself from torpor and sleep,
And Master Guizong who stretched out his legs
And lamented over the slow progress in his practice.

One should also keep in mind
How fast fleeting time goes by,
And how great are the favors of parents, the king,
Sentient beings, and the three Jewels,
The Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha!

Late spring, 1903
At Geumgang Hermitage
Geongheo Seong-u



The Record of the Construction of the Hall of the Great Dipper at the Geumgang Hermitage in Beomeo Monastery

The hardest material on earth is diamond,
And the most celebrated star in the sky is the Great Dipper.

The great function of the Great Dipper is to increase
The life span and happiness of human beings,
While concentration on that which is as firm as a diamond
Serves as a ferryboat that brings sentient beings
Across the sea of suffering.

The construction of the Hall of the Great Dipper
At Geumgang Hermitage is like the painting on the glue

And the moss on the towering hillock,
Both of which are inseparable co-partners.

Along with the Buddhas and the Buddhist scroll painting,
Enshrining the Solitary Awakened One,
Who imparts happiness to human and heavenly beings,
Would create good causal conditions
Benefiting all sentient beings
In amounts as great as the sands of the Ganges River.

It is highly laudable for the Buddhist laywoman
Kim Mahn Won-hwa from Choryang village
To construct the Hall of the Great Dipper
And then enshrine the Buddha statue along with the offering
Of incense for her son Bae Jeong-heon.

All her wishes for her son's miraculous good fortune
Will surely be fulfilled
In reward for her devout offerings.

Greater still will be the reward for the offerings
Of the rice paddies for the provision of the monastery

And the offerings of daily necessities,
And four Buddhist instruments, the Dharma drum,
The cloud-shaped brass, the wooden fish-shaped drum,
And the grand bell, all of which resulted
From the power of the Buddha-Dharma of Wolsong Sunim.

When I heard about the scenic beauty of Mt. Geumjeong,
And especially the beauty of Geumgang Hermitage,
During my rambling tour of many temples
On Mt. Sabul twenty years ago,
I really wanted to visit this place,
But it was my misfortune to miss the chance at that time.

Now I am very old and after having experienced
All kinds of ups and downs,
Countless old thoughts have lost their ardor, like cold ash.

When I arrived at the monastery with my backpack on,
Abbot Wolsong had just completed
The construction of the monastery.

The Great Sunim has been known to be a recluse,

Secluded from the mundane world,
And there was a plaque that he calls green moss,
Hanging on the wall,
Which indicates his taste for the serene and leisurely
Green vine twining around the body of a pine tree.
We immediately came to like each other
Even before our introduction was over.

The community of the monastery explained to me
About the hard work of the Master
And the great efforts of the devotees.

And when they implored me,
"We understand that you are a scholar-monk,
And it would be greatly appreciated
If you kindly write the record of the monastery for us,"
I gladly accepted their request.

But I had some misgivings, because the Great Dipper has a form
That everyone can clearly see,
And there were no problems involved
In the construction of its shrine.

But what about Vajrasamadhi, the diamond-like concentration,
What does it look like?

Alas!

It has been long since the sages departed,
And ascetic practitioners of today do not know
Their household chores of true practice,
That brought the termination of unsurpassed right Samadhi
And the illustrious wisdom of the Buddha.

I was beset with all kinds of doleful thoughts
When I was writing this record.



The Record of the Devotee of the Ten Thousand Day Assembly of Tae'an Monastery on Dongni Mountain Who Contributed the Grand Bell

The bell, the drum, the brass,
And the wooden fish-shaped drum:
All these have their different characteristics and functions,
And they are called the Four Instruments.

They are used when a Dharma lesson is given
By the Great Sunim at the rostrum in the Dharma Hall,
Or when there are Buddhist ceremonies,
Or at meal time to send a signal,
And nothing can be done without them at the temple.

The *Shurangama Sutra*, or the *Sutra of the Heroic Ones*, says
That the clear sounds of these instruments alleviate
The pains of all sentient beings,
And these wonderful sounds also alleviate
Even the pains of the sentient beings in Hell.
There is no end to the enumeration of all the virtues
Of these ceremonial Buddhist instruments.

The Great Sunim Yeongwol who resides at this temple
Is a great Seon Master
With a wide range of scholarship.

He established a group called the
Ten Thousand Days of Buddha Chanting Assembly
Devoted to those sentient beings whose only refuge is
The chanting of the names of Buddha.

It was truly regrettable that there was no great bell
In this hermitage, and a devotee,
A resident of Wansan city,
Song Jusang received an inspiration
And made a vow to donate the bell so as to attain a son.

The resounding beautiful sound of the great bell
Pervaded throughout the deep mountains
At daybreak to awaken all creation
With the invocation of compassion for all people,
Which will surely bring him a son.

I hereby write a few words to pass on
To future generations about the beautiful story
Of the devotion of layperson Song Jusang.

Early winter, 1900
Bhikku Gyeongheo
On the way back to the southwestern region

IV. Epistles



A Letter to Jang Sangsa and Kim Seokdu²⁷

I hope that you have been well and without any disturbances.

I am only a sickly old monk relishing a line of verse.

Have you received my letter I sent you last month

Through the monk residing at Yaksu Hermitage of Silsang Temple?

There is a saying in the Confucian tradition:

"It is the virtue of a wise man to find happiness

In reflecting upon oneself,

Not seeking anything from the outside."

To me, that seems too common.

²⁷ Sang-sa is a title referring to a certain social status or an official post. His given name was Hyoyeong, and his pen name was Jeongryeon. Seokdu is a pen name and his given name was Byeongseon. They both lived in Saengcheon-dong, Yecheon County.

But on second thought,
It is quite to the point and excellent
For the students of Buddha to take into regard.

Birth-death and Nirvana, saints and ordinary beings,
Good and evil, the practices of meditation, mantras,
Praying, and invocations of the Buddha's name:
All these have nothing to do with the material world.

There is nothing that is noisy or quiet in the outer world,
Yet people are still attracted to the things
Of the objective world, wandering in the dark
Like cows and goats in a field.

It is even more ludicrous
When we think about the matters
Of birth and death, calamities and fortune.

The Great Master Sengchao (僧肇) said,
"A deep thinking man has no self."
This is superfluous, however beautiful it is,
To the person who is studying the doctrine of truth,

Yet the reason I am quoting the passage is
That there is still some truth in it.
Hence an old master said,
"If one truly realizes the truth that there is nothing to rely on,
One would attain the ultimate truth."

Another quotation,
"One must break the mirror to see one's true face."
There will not be a single particle of dust on the broken mirror,
And one will see the wholesome face of the original self.

When we attain the ultimate realm of truth,
There will be nothing to adorn me and you and this or that.
Yet 'liberation' is yet another word of superfluity.

I saw the two of you studying hard
When I was visiting there from the south,
And I just wanted to say hello and inquire into your recent doings.
If I have talked too much,
Please forgive me for your inconvenience.

We are too far away from each other,

And the only means to meet is likely to be through these letters,
Which makes me more forlorn.



A Letter to Layman Ja-am

Cheonjang Monastery has a beautiful view
Of a mountain on one side and the sea on the other.
Not all people can enjoy such beautiful scenery,
So too is our association of the enlightened and the wise,
And all the more so, our encountering the Buddha and Patriarchs.

Is it not truly lamentable that
There is no way to describe the beauty of this place?

I heard that you are not well,
Yet in this is the best chance
For a practitioner to vanquish the devils,
The best chance for ardent practice.
Or, the best chance for the practitioner

To waste time in the realm of delusion.
There is nothing about which to be happy or worrisome.
Most of all, sickness comes from the mind,
Yet where do we find the mind, the heat wave?

When I get hungry, I say I'm hungry,
When I feel cold, I say as much,
And when I am sleepy, I simply go to bed.

There is no form to our practice,
And how fortunate it is to find a few fellow travelers
With whom to sing songs of mountains and fields.

I understand that you have it in mind to visit me,
Then why wait till next year?
Yet it is winter now and the weather is not fit for traveling.
Wait for the better weather,
But do not lose the good occasion to visit.



A Letter to the Noble Scholars Kim and Jang

Congratulations on attaining the unswerving right samadhi
And abiding in peace on the strength
Of wisdom of concentration.

But what is the use of peaceful tranquility
For the worthless monk who is neither
Able to exert himself nor save all sentient beings?

I have copied three songs and two verses that you have sent me
And enjoyed them both by singing and reciting them.
It was an unusual feast.

The ink has all dried up and the stacks of papers

Have all gone to tatters
While I was appreciating them with the heavenly muse.
I did not know the fabulous Minister Jinjo
And the old Layman Bang were residing in this world again.

An old master said,
"Studying the ultimate truth is to attain enlightenment."
Yet some students deviate from the right path
And busy themselves only in the study of letters
And discriminating knowledge.

Such wandering in the gales of karmic acts
Will never succeed
Unless one reflects upon oneself without negligence.

When we are apart from each other,
It is not so easy to obtain a cozy meeting,
Yet if we can maintain a clear mind of serenity,
There is still a chance of enjoying thus
The consummation of samadhi.

I happened to find a person to send this letter to,

Yet I must stop here because

I am in the condition of dictating this letter through a wayfarer.



A Letter to Bhikkuni Mui at Bogwang Hermitage of Janggok Monastery

Whether there is discrimination or no discrimination,

There are not two sides.

Why is that so?

It is four or five hundred mounds

Of blossom and willow,

And two and three thousand

Pavilions where music plays.

Tell me again whether it is the sound of not two or two?

If you think you know, you are a fool and a knave,

And to be acceptable, you must not know.

Even if you have attained such a stage,

You must study for three lives, and sixty eons.

The Story of Blossom and Willow by Gyeongheo

V. Brief Biographies of Masters



A Brief Biography of Preceptor Seoryong

An old master said,
"You should not worry about
The decline of the Buddha's teaching."

I think there is no fear about the fear
Of the decline of Buddha's teaching,
Yet there is also some fear about the decline
Of Buddha's teaching.

It is true that there is a law that does not change,
And it is also true that even if one does not cultivate
The Three-fold Learning of

Shila, Samadhi, and Prajna,²⁸

The teaching of the Buddha does not necessarily decline,
Yet there is no guarantee that it does not decline.

What the birds and cranes at the foot
Of the green mountain see are sarira stupas,
And the paintings on the silk
In the pavilion are portrait scrolls.
They are not materials that must necessarily be there,
But they became customary practices.

Yet recording one's life is different.
If it is not appropriate, it should not be written,
And about those who did not practice
The Three-fold Learning, nothing should be written.

Because of my lazy character and lack of skill,
I have not taken up my writing brush for some time.
Yet I have written quite a few letters, owing to persistent requests,
And when I was writing the brief life record of the Masters,

²⁸ The morality of precepts, the concentration of meditation, and the insight of wisdom.

I sometimes stopped my hand to ponder with wonder
Over the life of the Masters.

One could not achieve enlightenment
Without cultivating the Three-fold Learning,
And there is nothing to write about
The personage who has not attained enlightenment.

It is regrettable not to be eligible to have
A record made of one's life,
But it is more regrettable to have failed
In attaining enlightenment.
Without attaining enlightenment,
How one could follow the wisdom of the Buddha?

The essence of the Three-fold Learning is
To prevent the decline of Buddha's teaching,
And it is truly deplorable to see that
It is neglected by ascetic practitioners.

I have made a close reference with the record
Of Preceptor Seoryeong and found that

His lay family name is Kim,
And his family origin is in Gwangsan.
His posthumous title is Sangmin,
And Seoryong is his pen name.

Chuntaek is the name of his great grandfather,
The eighth descendent of a distinguished Confucian scholar Kim Sagye,
And he was born in 1814 in Seoul.

He was a bright and fine-looking boy when he was young,
And one day when he was seventeen years old,
He happened to witness the punishment of an official
On the street, and realized that riches and honor are
The root of all misfortune and vanity.

He then set out to Cheongryong Temple in Anseong
To take refuge under Elder Yeongwol, upon which he
Shaved his head and received his precepts to become a monk.

Then he set out to find the noted mountains for practice,
And when he reached Jiri Mountain,
Elder Yong-ak was preaching at Anguk Temple.

He began his study under the tutorship of Elder Yong-ak,
And when his study showed great progress,
He visited Preceptor Yong-am
And attained even greater insight.

At the age of twenty-seven,
He was allowed to have a personal interview
With Elder Giyang Seongjeon,
And since then he became more celebrated.

Upon the request of the Master,
He stayed at the run-down Byeoksong Monastery to restore it.
He also paid great attention to preserving
The Buddhist articles in the monastery.

He then went to Chinbul Hermitage for self cultivation
By facing the wall for several years.
He had surely attained great insight
Considering his illustrious career,
Yet it is not of a lesser minded one to perceive.

He was afflicted by a slight illness

On the twenty-seventh of December, 1890,
And when he was ready to enter Nirvana on the twenty-ninth,
Which happened to be the last day of the year by the lunar calendar,
The community of the temple was busy worrying about
The New Year's ceremony.

Learning about the inopportune time of his death,
He told the community,
"I have been a monk for sixty years,
How could I cause inconvenience to the Three Jewels, the
Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, by my untimely death?
Do not worry.
I will postpone my death till the second day of the new year."

But when the community then began worrying about
The inconvenience regarding the ceremony
For the Great Dipper on that day,
Using the same excuse as above,
He postponed his death till nine o'clock on the fourth day,
And asked the community,
"Is it alright to die now?"
The community said, "Yes."

After leaving his last wish to the assembly,
He asked them to recite the Sutras and chant the Buddha's name,
And then he entered Nirvana without pain.

The Sutra says,
"Uphold the precept as your teacher,"
And it says again,
"All Buddhas in the ten directions enter Nirvana
By relying on the Three-fold Learning,
Shila, Samadhi, and Prajna."

The Preceptor never neglected observing the precepts,
He was always very careful and upright
As if he were carving the jewel through his disposition,
Above and beyond his illustrious scholarship.

These must have been the reasons
That he was able to control
The time of his dying hour at his will.

How could this have been possible without his earnest practice
Of concentration and wisdom?

It is the same theory of practicing concentration and wisdom
By which the ancient Masters attained their enlightenment.

If we trace back the lineage of Dharma,
Hoiam transmitted the Dharma to Hanam,
Hanam to Chupa, Chupa to Gyeong-am,
Gyeong-am to Jung-am, and Jung-am to Giyang.
Hoiam received the Dharma from Bogwang,
Bogwang from Mo-un, Mo-un from Byeokam,
Byeokam from Buhyu, and Buhyu from Buyong.
Thus the Preceptor Seoryong is
The eleventh Dharma descendent of Master Buyong.

His lay age was seventy-eight, and his Dharma age, sixty.
It was a great loss for the Holy Orders,
And everyone in the Head temple was
In deep grief for the misfortune.

When I was passing by Yongmun Temple in the winter of 1865,
Elder Hoeun told me about Preceptor Seoryong's
Distinguished practice of the Buddha way,
And asked me to write a brief record of his life

To transmit for posterity.

Yet I declined the request because of my meager scholarship.

And then when I was passing by Byeoksong Monastery

A few weeks later,

I was asked again to write the record

By two venerable priests, Yeong-un and Dong-un,

Two disciples of Preceptor Seoryong.

On looking back, I spent a winter

At Byeoksong Monastery when I was young

And have met the preceptor,

And I received a strong impression of him

About his spiritual insight and dignity.

But I was too young and immature

In my learning at that time to ask for the favor

Of instruction to cleanse the dust of my mind,

And I have had the regret of missing this chance

In my heart ever since.

I am now fifty-five years old.

My beard is falling off

And there are wrinkles all over my face.

Yet I have still not attained the true teachings of the Buddha,

And have done nothing beneficial to myself or to others.

What is the use of deploring them now?

Besides my deep attachment to the virtue of the Preceptor,

I could hardly decline the request

Of the two venerable monks and Elder Hoeun.

Regardless of my poor hand at writing,

I thus have written down this record briefly, with many misgivings.



A Brief Biography of Preceptor Chuieun

It is twenty years since I idled away my life
In my hideout in the southwest region.

I have heard of the virtue of Preceptor Chuieun,
But we were far away apart and I did not have a chance
To pay a visit so that I could have cleansed
The dust of my mind before he passed away.
How could I express all my grief?

It was the cold winter of the year 1900,
And there was a snowstorm blowing hard
When I was passing by Songgwang Monastery on Mt. Jogye.
I just wanted to loaf around like the clouds in the sky.

When I was staying at the monastery,
The three brothers, Ja-ung, Geum-myeong, and Jaseong,
Told me about their deceased teacher:

"Our teacher's practice of the way of truth
Might not be comparable
To that of the celebrated ancient Patriarchs,
But he was exceptional among those in recent times.

It is the duty of the disciples to record
His virtuous conduct to transmit to posterity,
Yet, unfortunately, we did not have the chance.

We understand that your accomplished writing
And profound insight of the doctrine
Of meditation are superior,
And it is our sincere wish for you to write
And exalt our teacher's attainments.

This is the only way to preserve
The accomplishments of our Master
And relieve us from our duty.

We beg your grace not to forsake our sincere wish."

Though I declined their request more than once,

I could not forsake their repeated requests.

The posthumous title of the Preceptor was Minuk,

His posthumous Buddhist name, Chuieon,

And his lay family name was Choi, from the Haeju clan.

The family moved to Bonghwa in South Gyeongsan Province in 1815,

And their house was built in September of the next year.

He was both smart and courageous,

And looked more mature than his age.

At the age of fourteen,

He suddenly decided to renounce the mundane world,

And went to Gakhwa Temple on Mt. Taebaek

To take refuge under Elder Jinju, whereupon he

Shaved his head and became a monk.

It has been some years since he has lived

The false life of the mundane world.

How then could he understand that there is no difference

Between the law of wisdom
And the way of life of the mundane world?
At the age of forty,
He made a visit to Amitabha Monastery
In Mt. Taebaek to see Elder Choeun
And asked him in earnest about the Dharma.

He found the Elder to be worthy as an eminent teacher,
And studied under him for ten years,
Attaining the sublime truth.
Yet no one knew about his achievement
Because he did not want it to be known to others.

Then in 1823 when he was sixty-eight years old,
He stayed at the Yongsu cave for ten years,
Just like a sitting clod of earth,
Leaving every tiny thought behind like cold ash.

And then, finally, with the clear mind of wisdom of truth,
He suddenly attained enlightenment.

An old master said,

"One must drink water for himself to know
Whether it is cold or warm,"
And this is what practice is for.
Seon Master Cheongheo also said,
"Even if it takes thousands of eons
Of cyclical birth and death,
Seon practitioners should not yearn
For the enlightenment of sages,
Or argue about the right and wrong of others."

The Preceptor set his mind and at last
Achieved ultimate enlightenment,
Upon which his life transformed like a diamond,
Dressed up with all the virtues of meditation,
Without colorful attractions,
Deaf to the sounds of pleasant musical instruments,
Blind to the spectacles of the phenomenal world,
Wherewith all the quarrels over right and wrong
Receded by their own account,
Establishing the firm and complete foothold
Of the house of Dhyana,
The practice of spiritual meditation and concentration.

He stayed in Mt. Myohyang to the north,
And Mt. Duryu to the south.
Thus, half of his lifelong mode of life was
Like an unoccupied leisurely cloud in the blue sky
Or a lonely crane in the field.

He was also unconventional, free and easy, always humble.
Some people who were disrespectful
To him at first regretted it later
When they learned of his true noble character.

In the spring of 1834, when he was 79 years old,
He took his abode at the Amitabha Monastery on Mt. Dongni,
Opened the meditation assembly
And made it known far and wide through his strenuous efforts
Although his illustrious body was old.

After taking his last residence at Myeongjeok Nanya
Four years later in 1837,
He spent his last quiet life for three years,
Until taking ill on the seventh of January 1839,
And dying at three o'clock in the afternoon

On the fourteenth of the month.

Alas!

It is an inevitable law that every living form or thing
Must return to emptiness, even the enlightened ones.
All the community at the temple
And the people in the village fell into deep sorrow.

How was he when he passed away?
He was peaceful and sitting upright as usual,
And when the temple superintendent asked:

"You are now entering Nirvana.
When the Four Mountains, the Great Elements,
Earth, Water, Fire, and Wind,
Contend with one another,
Would your Samadhi
And Prajna stay firm without disturbance?"
The Master set up a square wooden pillow
And entered Nirvana in the upright sitting position.
One should never regard the famous episode
Of Master Juzhi's raising his thumb as nonsense.

When it is cold or warm,
The great space strikes the fire
And the freezing ice to pieces.
Yet they are all the stories of the mundane world.
The story of the Master's setting up a wooden pillow
Is a useful and illuminating story
That can either kill or let one live.

It is like a dialogue between the Master of the monastery
And the Patriarch Zhaozhou,
Yet they are not merely the beautiful episodes of olden times.

The night when the Master entered Nirvana,
There was a majestic stream of light stretching across the sky
Like a rainbow, and the illumination
Remained for five days even after the cremation.

Five colorful lights kept gathering and dispersing
Accompanied by brilliant clouds,
Auspicious and in magnificent shapes.
Monks and lay people were all taken aback and cried,
"It is like a scene from when an ancient sage entered into Nirvana."

The Master was born in 1816 and died in 1899.

His lay age was eighty-four,

And as he entered the Buddhist Order

At the age of fourteen,

His Dharma age was seventy-one.

The Dharma was transmitted from the Master

To Choeun Euiyu,

And then from Choeun to Yeonwol I-jun.

Buhyu transmitted the Dharma to Byeokam,

Byeokam to Chuijing, Chuijing to Baekam,

Baekam to Muyong, Muyong to Yeonghae,

Yeonghae to Pungam, Pungam to Byeokdam,

Byeokdam to Yeongwol, Yeongwol to Nakpa,

And then Nakpa transmitted the Dharma to Yeonwol.

Thus, the Master was the twelfth generation Dharma descendent of

Buhyu, and the seventeenth generation Dharma descendent of Taego.

Now, as the Buddha's teaching has declined

And the Eye Treasury of Right Dharma

Was almost buried in the ground,

It was Master Chuieun who practiced

Concentration and wisdom with a firm determination
To restore the discipline aright,
And it was like a lotus flower
Emerging from the burning fire,
A truly laudable feat beyond description.

I am a worthless and useless monk, full of faults,
An obstacle to the teachings of Buddha.
If he could not be delivered by the moral law,
How could he be delivered by writing?

That was the reason why I have abandoned
The writing brush and ink about ten years ago.
Moreover, my writing skill has declined
With my loss of interest in fine words and phrases.

Yet because of the earnest request of three brothers,
Ja-eung, Geum-myeong, and Euiseong,
Disciples of Preceptor Chuieun,
I could not decline their request to write
The brief life record of their Master.

I sincerely wish that this brief account
Be a compensation for my missing the honor
Of a personal meeting with the illustrious Master.

Late December, 1900
By Bhikku Gyeongheo
On the way back to the southwestern region
With an offering of incense
At the Ja-an Hall of Songgwang Monastery, Mt. Jogye

VI. The Eulogium of Portrait Scrolls



The Portrait Scroll of Daegak Deung-gye Geumbongdang²⁹

Mighty was the vow of Elder Geumbong.
He guarded the temple and served the Buddha with all his heart.
So dignified was his propriety
And mysterious was the manner of its transmission.

Life and death are not two, just as the empty blue sky.
To the awakened, everything is as it is.
The sun sets over the green mountain
And the tide of the sea recedes to the long shore.

By the humble servant Gyeongheo Seong-u
With an offering of incense

²⁹ The portrait is hung in the Shrine of Portraits at Beomeo Monastery.



The Portrait Scroll of the Great Patriarch Donggok Dang³⁰

If the true meaning is attained,
Even the gossips on the street turn
To the illustrious teaching of Buddha.

Otherwise, even the treasured Sutra
In the palace of the dragon under the sea
Would turn to a bunch of talking in one's sleep.

The enlightened have no interest in the silks,
No matter how gorgeous and beautiful they are.

³⁰ The portrait is hung in the Shrine of Portraits at Beomeo Monastery.

Then what is the ultimate meaning in that? Let the people see the
embroidery of a pair of love-birds
But do not let them have the needle.

Elder Dong-gok! Hal!

As I understand you would not mind
My meddling the head of the cloud,
I would like to compose a verse of the mundane world:

Lofty is your upholding the Buddha
And guarding of the Dharma.

The spotless moon where our true nature abides
Is reflected in the water,
And the flowers are blooming in the warm breeze of spring.

A scroll of a portrait is hanging high in the hall of clouds,
Lofty is your virtue,
High is the mountain, and the water flows as ever.

By Gyeongheo Seong-u
On the way back to the southwestern region
With an offering of incense



The Eulogium of Preceptor Geum-u

He is the father of Hoeun and the son of Hwaun.

He is a wise and virtuous monk, with skill in writing.

He never talked about anything other than the Buddha's teaching,

And he never thought about anything other than the Buddha's mind.

A wise man knows nothing has its own self-nature,

And where there is no self-nature,

There is neither beginning nor ending.

They drew this portrait with great solemnity

To transmit it to posterity forever and ever.

I, thus, pay my homage to the Master

With a bow and an offering of incense.



The Eulogium of Preceptor Inbong

A dignified appearance, a kindly mind,
And enduring enlightenment abide in the steadfast mind.

Constant practice and recitation of Sutras,
In addition to your upright conduct,
Won the respect of the community.

Sentient beings and the Buddha are not two, but one,
Let us, then, respect them with praise and a bow.



The Eulogium of Preceptor Daeyeon

Elder Daeyeon at Yongmun Temple

Discoursed on the Sutras and raised a great sensation.

After his death,

Venerable Hoeun enshrined the portrait

Of his teacher in Haein Monastery on Mt. Gaya

To repay his debt to his old teacher.

Great is the virtue of the Elder

And highly praiseworthy is Hoeun's requital of a favor.

Thus I enter the non-duality gate of difference,

And this is the pavilion of Amitabha,

And the railing of the Palace of Utmost Bliss.



The Eulogium of Preceptor Guiam

The gentleman Bae asked Patriarch Hwangbyeok,
"Your portrait scroll is here, but where are you now?"
The Patriarch called to gentleman Bae,
And when he answered the call,
The Patriarch said, "Where are you now?"
This was a typical example of the old masters,
But we do not find them anymore.
Elder Guiam regarded the Three Jewels
As one mind, not two,
And the mind is pure, and its form is as it originally was,
A glimpse of a portrait of ○.
One does not have to ask where one is.
There is no second man.



The Eulogium of Preceptor Go-am

Resolute is the order of the Patriarch:

The star points to the north,

And water flows to the East Sea.

Material things have nothing to do with right or wrong

And official or private.

He teaches the Six Paramitas with the mind,

Which is the magnificent skill of a maestro.

Death is an eternal rest,

Returning to a native home

By cultivation of the sublime truth.



Afterword

The old master Gyeongheo was the most illustrious monk during the last era of Joseon Dynasty. He restored a Korean Buddhism that was in decline by producing countless great masters to help preserve the long tradition of meditation practice in the country.

Even though he was born during a time of Buddhism's decline in Korea, the old master was so great that he could be considered the equal to the great masters of the Five Schools at the time of the Tang and Song Dynasty in China.

In the spring of 1990, layman Beopan Kim Min-yeong brought me a hand copy of *The Collected Writings of Gyeongheo* written by the old master Hanam. It was not that different from the edition used as a text at

the Seon Academy. The only difference was it also included a brief biography of the preceptor Gyeongheo written by the old master Hanam on the front page of the book.

I was so glad to see this treasured artifact of our Buddhist Order that I immediately undertook the translation of the text into Korean, in spite of the lack of my ability and scholarship. When I took an oath at Haein Monastery to become a monk in the 1950s, there were numerous temples and Seon Halls where the old preceptors taught practitioners. It was a time of Seon Buddhism's revival in Korea, and each of these new training centers was like another Vulture Peak. But the old masters have deceased one by one, and there are few left to preserve the illustrious traditions of the Buddha.

In such circumstances, I am sure that the writings of the old master Gyeongheo will promote the practice of Seon Buddhism in Korea again. I want to thank layman Byeokcheon Kim In-bong for his careful proofreading. I also want to thank all the contributors for their assistance, both spiritual and material.

Early Autumn, 1990
Bhikku of Yeongchui, Myeongjeong



English Translator's Afterword

Considering the great role and teachings of Master Gyeongheo in the history of modern Korean Buddhism, it is remarkable that no translations of the Master's writings have appeared in a Western language until now. To be frank, this was not an easy job, especially the translation of the Seon poems. It required erudition, not only in Buddhism but also in the Chinese classics, and in addition to that, a great imagination. I sincerely want to thank Professor Shin Seong-chul, Professor Emeritus in the Department of English at Chungnam National University, who read the entire manuscript of my English translation.

I also want to express my gratitude to Professor Yu Ye-geun, Department of Korean Literature, Chungnam National University, who helped me with the interpretation of poems and the Chinese folklore, and Seonrim Sunim at Manbul Monastery in Daejeon, who helped me with

the Chinese Buddhist terms.

I need to express my greatest gratitude to Mr. Matty Wegehaupt, Fulbright Researcher, for the excellent job he did editing my translation and for the great number of valuable footnotes he contributed, supplementing those I had already provided. His notes regarding Buddhist terms, Chinese Chan masters, and other information about Chinese literature and folklore will be of great service to the reader.

I also want to extend my sincere gratitude to the Bureau of Propagation of the Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism for asking me, to undertake the important job of translating the *Collection of the Writings of Great Master Gyeongheo* into English. I also want to extend my thanks to Mr. Cho Hyun Woo and Mr. Nam Won Keun at the Bureau of Propagation, who helped me in many ways during the translation process.

I also owe my greatest gratitude to Pop Chin Sunim for his correction of technical Buddhist terms. It definitely improved the authority of the English translation.

Lastly, I want the readers to be prepared for some of the singular and puzzling poems of the great master and, sometimes, for my even more

outlandish English translation. Any criticism, comments, or advice will be greatly appreciated.

November 15, 2006
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