

PART THREE
VERSES AND TEXTS FOR OTHER OCCASIONS

A. Verses

Verse of Homage to Buddha's Relics

(*Shari raimon* 舍利礼文)

With wholehearted reverence we bow
to the relics of the true body
◎ of the Tathagata Shakyamuni,
who is fully endowed with myriad virtues;
to the dharma body which is the fundamental ground;
and to his stupa, which is the whole
universe. With deep respect we venerate the one
who manifested a body for our sake.
Through the sustaining power of the Buddha,
which enters us even as we enter it,
we verify awakening.
By means of the Buddha's spiritual power,
we benefit living beings,
● arouse the thought of awakening,
cultivate bodhisattva practice,
and together enter perfect peace,
● the knowledge of the equality of all things.
Now let us reverently bow.

Sutra-Opening Verse

(*Kaikyō ge* 開經偈)

The unsurpassed, profound, and wondrous dharma
is rarely met with, even in a hundred, thousand, million
kalpas.

Now we can see and hear it, accept and maintain it.
May we unfold the meaning of the Tathagata's truth.

Robe Verse

(*Takkesa ge* 搭袈裟偈)

How great, the robe of liberation,
a formless field of merit.
Wrapping ourselves in Buddha's teaching,
we free all living beings.

Repentance Verse

(*Sange mon* 懺悔文)

All my past and harmful karma,
born from beginningless greed, hate, and delusion,
through body, speech, and mind,
I now fully avow.

Three Refuges Verse

(*Sankie mon* 三歸依文)

Hail refuge in buddha;
hail refuge in dharma;
hail refuge in sangha.

I take refuge in buddha, honored as the highest;
I take refuge in dharma, honored as the stainless;
I take refuge in sangha, honored as harmonious.

I have completely taken refuge in buddha;
I have completely taken refuge in dharma;
I have completely taken refuge in sangha.

Three Refuges Prayer

(*Sanki raimon* 三歸礼文)

I take refuge in buddha.
May all beings
embody the great way,
resolving to awaken.

I take refuge in dharma.
May all living beings
deeply enter the sutras,
wisdom like an ocean

I take refuge in sangha.
May all beings
support harmony in the community,
free from hindrance.

Verse in Worship of the Three Venerable Ones

(*Sanzon raimon* 三尊礼文)

Homage to our great benefactor and lord of the
doctrine, the Original Teacher Shakyamuni Buddha.
Homage to the High Patriarch Dogen.
Homage to the Eminent Patriarch Keizan.
We gather up and receive your great
compassionate pity.
May we encounter and obtain it from life to life
in every world.

Prostrations Verse

(*Raibai ge* 礼拝偈)

The nature of that which can be and is worshiped is empty and still.

One's own body and the body of the other are in essence not two.

May we together with all beings obtain liberation, giving rise to the supreme intention and relying on the ultimate truth.

Four Vows

(*Shigu seigan mon* 四弘誓願文)

Beings are numberless; I vow to free them.

Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them.

Dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter them.

The buddha way is unsurpassable; I vow to realize it.

Formal Meal Verses

(*Gyōhatsu nenju* 行鉢念誦)

[Note: underlined passages are chanted by leader only.]

Verse upon Hearing the Meal Signal

(*Montsui no ge* 聞槌之偈)

Buddha was born in Kapilavastu,
enlightened in Magadha,
taught in Varanasi,
entered nirvana in Kushinagara.

Verse for Setting Out Bowls

(*Tenpatsu no ge* 展鉢之偈)

Now we set out Buddha's bowls;
may we, with all living beings,
realize the emptiness of the three wheels:
giver, receiver, and gift.

Ten Buddha Names

(*Jūbutsumyō* 十仏名)

In the midst of the three treasures
which verify our understanding,
entrusting ourselves to the sangha,
we recall:

Vairochana Buddha, pure Dharmakaya;
Lochana Buddha, complete Sambhogakaya;
Shakyamuni Buddha, myriad Nirmanakaya;
Maitreya Buddha, of future birth;
all buddhas throughout space and time;
Lotus of the Wondrous Dharma, Mahayana sutra.

Manjushri Bodhisattva, great wisdom;
Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, great activity;
Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, great compassion;
all honored ones, bodhisattvas, mahasattvas;
wisdom beyond wisdom, maha prajna paramita.

Food Offering Verse <at breakfast>
(*Sejiki ge* 施食偈)

This morning meal of ten benefits
nourishes us in our practice.
Its rewards are boundless,
filling us with ease and joy.

Food Offering Verse <at lunch>
(*Sejiki ge* 施食偈)

The three virtues and six tastes of this meal
are offered to buddha and sangha.
May all sentient beings in the universe
be equally nourished.

[Note: when the preceding verses have been chanted, the food is served.
Prior to eating, the following verses are chanted:]

Verse of Five Contemplations
(*Gokan no ge* 五觀之偈)

We reflect on the effort that brought us this food
and consider how it comes to us.
We reflect on our virtue and practice, and whether
we are worthy of this offering.
We regard greed as the obstacle to freedom of mind.
We regard this meal as medicine to sustain our life.
For the sake of enlightenment we now receive this food.

Verse of Food for Spirits <at lunch only>
(*Saba ge* 生飯偈)

Oh spirits, we now give you an offering;
this food is for all of you in the ten directions.

Bowl-Raising Verse
(*Keihatsu no ge* 擎鉢之偈)

First, this is for the three treasures;
next, for the four benefactors;
finally, for the beings in the six realms.
May all be equally nourished.

The first portion is to end all evil;
the second is to cultivate every good;
the third is to free all beings.
May everyone realize the buddha way.

[Note: when the preceding verses have been chanted, begin eating.
When finished, while washing bowls, chant the following:]

Verse of the Rinse Water
(*Sessui no ge* 折水之偈)

The water with which we wash our bowls
tastes like ambrosia.
We offer it to the many spirits;
may they be satisfied.
On ma ku ra sai so wa ka.

Verse of Purity While Abiding in the World

(*Sho sekai bon no ge* 処世界梵之偈)

Abiding in this ephemeral world
like a lotus in muddy water,
the mind is pure and goes beyond.
Thus we bow to buddha.

Bath Verse

(*Nyūyoku no ge* 入浴之偈)

Bathing the body,
may all living beings
be clean in body and mind,
pure and shining within and without.

Face-Washing Verse

(*Senmen no ge* 洗面之偈)

<when picking up the toothbrush>

Holding the toothbrush,
may all living beings
attain the true dharma,
and be naturally pure and clean.

<when using the toothbrush>

Brushing the teeth in the morning,
I vow with all beings,
to care for the eyeteeth
that bite through all afflictions.

<when rinsing the mouth>

Rinsing the mouth,
may all living beings
approach the pure dharma gate
and accomplish liberation.

<when washing the face>

Washing the face,
I vow with all beings to
attain the pure dharma gate
and be forever undefiled.

B. Eko

Abbreviated Transfer of Merit to Lay People

(*Zaike ryaku ekō* 在家略回向)

We humbly beg the three treasures for their illumination.

Having chanted the preceding sutras and dharanis, we dedicate the merit generated thereby to the spirit of (dharma name), that the land of his/her reward may be adorned.

Transfer of Merit at a Lay Person's Grave

(*Zaike bozen ekō* 在家墓前回向)

Having chanted, we dedicate the merit to the spirits of the ancestors and deceased family members of the (dharma name) household, that the land of his/her reward may be adorned.

Universal Transference of Merit

(*Fuekō* 普回向)

May this merit extend universally to all, so that we together with all beings realize the buddha way.

C. Other Texts

Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen

(*Fukan zazengi* 普勸坐禪儀)

The way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent on practice and realization? The true vehicle is self-sufficient. What need is there for special effort? Indeed, the whole body is free from dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from this very place; what is the use of traveling around to practice? And yet, if there is a hairsbreadth deviation, it is like the gap between heaven and earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion. Suppose you are confident in your understanding and rich in enlightenment, gaining the wisdom that knows at a glance, attaining the way and clarifying the mind, arousing an aspiration to reach for the heavens. You are playing in the entranceway, but you are still short of the vital path of emancipation.

Consider the Buddha: although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of upright sitting can yet be seen. As for Bodhidharma, although he had received the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still. If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice?

Therefore, put aside the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing phrases, and learn to take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will manifest. If you want to realize such, get to work on such right now.

For practicing Zen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Put aside all involvements and suspend all affairs. Do not think “good” or “bad.” Do not judge true or false. Give up the operations of mind, intellect, and consciousness; stop measuring with thoughts, ideas, and views. Have no designs on becoming a buddha. How could that be limited to sitting or lying down?

At your sitting place, spread out a thick mat and put a cushion on it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position. In the full-lotus position, first place your right foot on your left thigh, then your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, simply place your left foot on your right thigh. Tie your robes loosely and arrange them neatly. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left hand on your right palm, thumb-tips lightly touching. Straighten your body and sit upright, leaning neither left nor right, neither forward nor backward. Align your ears with your shoulders and your nose with your navel. Rest the tip of your tongue against the front of the roof of your mouth, with teeth together and lips shut. Always keep your eyes open and breathe softly through your nose.

Once you have adjusted your posture, take a breath and exhale fully, rock your body right and left, and settle into steady, immovable sitting. Think of not thinking. Not thinking – what kind of thinking is that?

Nonthinking. This is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not meditation practice. It is simply the dharma gate of joyful ease, the practice-realization of totally culminated enlightenment. It is the koan realized; traps and snares can never reach it. If you

grasp the point, you are like a dragon gaining the water, like a tiger taking to the mountains. For you must know that the true dharma appears of itself, so that from the start dullness and distraction are struck aside.

When you arise from sitting, move slowly and quietly, calmly and deliberately. Do not rise suddenly or abruptly. In surveying the past, we find that transcendence of both mundane and sacred, and dying while either sitting or standing, have all depended entirely on the power of zazen.

In addition, triggering awakening with a finger, a banner, a needle, or a mallet, and effecting realization with a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout – these cannot be understood by discriminative thinking; much less can they be known through the practice of supernatural power. They must represent conduct beyond seeing and hearing. Are they not a standard prior to knowledge and views?

This being the case, intelligence or lack of it is not an issue; make no distinction between the dull and the sharp-witted. If you concentrate your effort single-mindedly, that in itself is wholeheartedly engaging the way. Practice-realization is naturally undefiled. Going forward is, after all, an everyday affair.

In general, in our world and others, in both India and China, all equally hold the buddha-seal. While each lineage expresses its own style, they are all simply devoted to sitting, totally blocked in resolute stability. Although they say that there are ten thousand distinctions and a thousand variations, they just wholeheartedly engage the way in zazen. Why leave behind the seat in your own

home to wander in vain through the dusty realms of other lands? If you make one misstep, you stumble past what is directly in front of you.

You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not pass your days and nights in vain. You are taking care of the essential activity of the buddha-way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from a flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, the fortunes of life like a dart of lightning – emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash.

Please, honored followers of Zen, long accustomed to groping for the elephant, do not doubt the true dragon. Devote your energies to the way of direct pointing at the real. Revere the one who has gone beyond learning and is free from effort. Accord with the enlightenment of all the buddhas; succeed to the samadhi of all the ancestors. Continue to live in such a way, and you will be such a person. The treasure store will open of itself, and you may enjoy it freely.

The Meaning of Practice and Verification

(*Shushōgi* 修証義)

I. General Introduction

1. The most important issue of all for Buddhists is the thorough clarification of the meaning of birth and death. If the buddha is within birth and death, there is no birth and death. Simply understand that birth and death are in themselves nirvana; there is no birth and death to be hated nor nirvana to be desired. Then, for the first time, we will be freed from birth and death. To master this problem is of supreme importance.

2.◎ It is difficult to be born as a human being; it is rare to encounter the buddha-dharma. Now, thanks to our good deeds in the past, not only have we been born as humans, we have also encountered the buddha-dharma. Within the realm of birth and death, this good birth is the best; let us not waste our precious human lives, irresponsibly abandoning them to the winds of impermanence.

3. Impermanence is unreliable; we know not on what roadside grasses the dew of our transient life will fall. Our bodies are not our own; our lives shift with the passing days and cannot be stopped for even an instant. Once rosy-cheeked youth has gone, we cannot find even its traces. Careful reflection shows that most things, once gone by, will never be encountered again. In the face of impermanence, there is no help from kings, statesmen, relatives, servants, spouses, children, or wealth. We must enter the realm of death alone, accompanied only by our good and bad karma.

4. Avoid associating with deluded people in this world who are ignorant of the truth of causality and karmic retribution, who are heedless of past, present and future, and cannot distinguish good from evil. The principle of causality is obvious and impersonal; for inevitably those who do evil fall, and those who do good rise. If there were no causality, the buddhas would not have appeared in this world, nor would Bodhidharma have come from the west.

5. The karmic consequences of good and evil occur at three different times. The first is retribution experienced in our present life; the second is retribution experienced in the life following this one; and the third is retribution experienced in subsequent lives. In practicing the way of the buddhas and ancestors, from the start we should study and clarify the principle of karmic retribution in these three times. ◎ Otherwise, we will often make mistakes and fall into false views. Not only will we fall into false views, we will fall into evil births and undergo long periods of suffering.

6. ◎ Understand that in this birth we have only one life, not two or three. How regrettable it is if, falling into false views, we are subject to the consequences of evil deeds. Because we think that it is not evil even as we do evil, ● and falsely imagine that there will be no consequences of evil, ● there is no way for us to avoid those consequences.

II. Repenting and Eliminating Bad Karma

7. ◎ The buddhas and ancestors, because of their limitless sympathy, have opened the vast gates of compassion in order to lead all beings to awakening. Among humans and devas, who would not enter? Although karmic retribution for evil acts must come in one of the three times, repentance lessens the effects, or eliminates the bad karma and brings about purification.

8. ◎ Therefore, we should repent before buddha in all sincerity. The power of the merit that results from repenting in this way before buddha saves and purifies us. This merit encourages the growth of unobstructed faith and effort. When faith appears it transforms both self and other, and its benefits extend to beings both sentient and insentient.

9. The gist of repentance is expressed as follows:
“Although we have accumulated much bad karma in the past, producing causes and conditions that obstruct our practice of the way, may the buddhas and ancestors who have attained the way of the buddha take pity on us, liberate us from our karmic entanglements, and remove obstructions to our study of the way. May their merit fill up ◎ and hold sway over the inexhaustible dharma realm, so that they share with us their compassion.”
Buddhas and ancestors were once like us; in the future we shall be like them.

10. ◎ “All my past and harmful karma, born from beginningless greed, hate, and delusion, through body, speech, and mind, I now fully avow.” If we repent in this way, we will certainly receive the mysterious guidance of the

buddhas and ancestors. ● Keeping this in mind and acting in the appropriate manner, ● we should openly confess before the buddha. The power of this confession will cut the roots of our bad karma.

III. Receiving Precepts and Joining the Ranks

11. ◎ Next, we should pay profound respects to the three treasures of buddha, dharma, and sangha. We should vow to make offerings and pay respects to the three treasures even in future lives and bodies. This reverent veneration of buddha, dharma, and sangha is what the buddhas and ancestors in both India and China correctly transmitted.

12. ◎ Beings of meager fortune and scant virtue are unable even to hear the name of the three treasures; how much less can they take refuge in them. Do not, being compelled by fear, vainly take refuge in mountain spirits or ghosts, or in the shrines of non-Buddhists. Those kinds of refuges do not liberate from sufferings. Quickly taking refuge in the three treasures of buddha, dharma, and sangha will not only bring release from suffering, it will lead to the realization of enlightenment.

13. In taking refuge in the three treasures, we should have pure faith. Whether during the Tathagata's lifetime or after, we place our palms together in gassho, bow our heads, and recite: "We take refuge in buddha, we take refuge in dharma, we take refuge in sangha." We take refuge in the buddha because he is the great teacher. We take refuge in the dharma because it is good medicine. We take refuge in the sangha because it is an excellent friend. It is only by taking refuge in the three

treasures that we become disciples of the Buddha. Whatever precepts we receive, they are always taken after the three refuges. Therefore it is in dependence on the three refuges that we gain the precepts.

14. The merit of taking refuge in the buddha, dharma, and sangha is always fulfilled when there is a spiritual communication of supplication and response. When there is a spiritual communication of supplication and response, devas, humans, hell dwellers, hungry ghosts, and animals all take refuge. Those who have taken refuge, in life after life, time after time, existence after existence, place after place, will steadily advance, surely accumulate merit, and attain unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment. We should realize that the merit of the threefold refuge is the most honored, the highest, the most profound, and inconceivable. The World-Honored One himself has already borne witness to this, and living beings should believe in it.

15. Next we should receive the three sets of pure precepts: the precepts of restraining behavior, the precepts of doing good, and the precepts of benefiting living beings. We should then accept the ten grave prohibitions. First, do not kill; second, do not steal; third, do not engage in improper sexual conduct; fourth, do not lie; fifth, do not deal in intoxicants; sixth, do not criticize others; seventh, do not praise self and slander others; eighth, do not be stingy with the dharma or property; ninth, do not give way to anger; and tenth, do not disparage the three treasures. The buddhas all receive and upheld these three refuges, three sets of pure precepts, and ten grave prohibitions.

16. Those who receive the precepts verify the unsurpassed, complete, perfect enlightenment verified by all the buddhas of the three times, the fruit of buddhahood, adamant and indestructible. Is there any wise person who would not gladly seek this goal? The World-Honored One has clearly shown to all living beings that when they receive the buddha's precepts, they join the ranks of the buddhas, the rank equal to the great awakening; truly they are the children of the buddhas.

17. ◎ The buddhas always dwell in this, giving no thought to its various aspects; beings long function in this, the aspects never revealed in their various thoughts. ◎ At this time, the land, grasses and trees, fences and walls, tiles and pebbles, all things in the dharma realm of the ten directions, perform the work of the buddhas. Therefore, the beings who enjoy the benefits of wind and water thus produced are all mysteriously aided by the wondrous and inconceivable transformative power of buddha, and manifest a personal awakening. ● This is the merit of non-intention, the merit of non-artifice. ● This is arousing the thought of enlightenment.

IV. Making the Vow to Benefit Beings

18. ◎ To arouse the thought of enlightenment is to vow to save all beings before saving ourselves. Whether lay person or monk, whether a deva or a human, whether suffering or at ease, we should quickly form the intention of first saving others before saving ourselves.

19. ◎ Though of humble appearance, one who has formed this intention is already the teacher of all living beings. Even a girl of seven is a teacher to the fourfold

assembly, a compassionate father to living beings. Do not make an issue of male and female. This is a most wondrous principle of the way of buddha.

20. After arousing the thought of enlightenment, even though we cycle through the six destinies and four modes of birth, the circumstances of this cycling themselves are all the practice of the vow of enlightenment. Therefore, although until now we may have vainly idled away our time, we should quickly make the vow before the present life has passed. Even if we have acquired a full measure of merit, sufficient to become a buddha, we turn it over, dedicating it to living beings that they may become buddhas and attain the way. There are some who practice for countless kalpas, saving living beings first without themselves becoming buddhas; they only save beings and benefit beings.

21. There are four kinds of wisdom that benefit living beings: giving, kind speech, beneficial deeds, and cooperation. These are the practices of the vow of the bodhisattva. "Giving" means not to covet. In principle, although nothing is truly one's own, this does not prevent us from giving. Do not disdain even a small offering; its giving will surely bear fruit. Therefore, we should give even a line or a verse of the dharma, sowing good seeds for this life and other lives. We should give even a penny or a single blade of grass of resources, establishing good roots for this world and other worlds. The dharma is a resource, and resources are the dharma. Without coveting reward or thanks from others, we simply share our strength with them. Providing ferries and building bridges are also the perfection of giving. Earning a living and producing goods are fundamentally nothing other than giving.

22. “Kind speech” means, when meeting living beings, to think kindly of them and offer them affectionate words. To speak with a feeling of tenderness toward living beings, as if they were one’s own infant, is what is meant by kind speech. We should praise the virtuous and pity the virtueless. Kind speech is fundamental to mollifying one’s enemies and fostering harmony among one’s friends. Hearing kind speech to one’s face brightens one’s countenance and pleases one’s heart. Hearing kind speech indirectly leaves a deep impression. We should realize that kind speech has the power to move the heavens.

23. “Beneficial deeds” means to devise good ways of benefiting living beings, whether noble or humble. Those who encountered the trapped tortoise and the injured bird simply performed beneficial deeds for them, without seeking their reward or thanks. The foolish believe that their own interests will suffer if they put the benefits of others first. This is not the case. Beneficial deeds are one, universally benefiting self and others.

24. ◎ “Cooperation” means not to differentiate; to make no distinction between self and others. It is, for example, like the human Tathagata who was the same as other human beings. There is a way of understanding such that we ◎ identify others with ourselves and then identify ourselves with others. At such times self and other are without boundaries. The ocean does not reject any water; this is cooperation. It is because of this that water collects and becomes an ocean.

25. In sum, we should calmly reflect on the fact that the practice of the vow of arousing the thought of enlightenment

has such principles; we should not be too hasty here.

● In working to save others, ● we should venerate and respect the merit that allows all living beings to receive guidance.

V. Practicing Buddhism and Repaying Blessings

26. ◎ Arousing the thought of enlightenment is mainly something that human beings in this world should do. Should we not rejoice that we have had the opportunity to be born in this land of the Buddha Shakyamuni and to have encountered him?

27. We should calmly consider that if this was a time when the true dharma had not yet spread in the world, we would not be able to encounter it, even if we vowed to sacrifice our very lives for it. We who have at present encountered the true dharma should make such a vow. Do we not know that the Buddha said, “When you meet their teachers who expound supreme enlightenment, do not consider their family background, do not regard their appearance, do not dislike their faults, and do not think about their conduct. Simply, out of respect for wisdom, bow to them three times daily, honor them, and do not cause them any grief.”

28. That we are now able to see the Buddha and hear the dharma is due to the blessings that have come to us through the practice of every one of the buddhas and ancestors. If the buddhas and ancestors had not directly transmitted the dharma, how could it have reached us today? We should be grateful for the blessings of even a single phrase; we should be grateful for the blessings of even a single dharma. How much more should we be

grateful for the great blessings of the treasury of the eye of the true dharma, the supreme great dharma. The injured bird did not forget its blessings, but showed its thanks with the rings of three ministries. The trapped tortoise did not forget its blessings, but showed its thanks with the seal of Yubu. If even animals repay their blessings, how could humans ignore them?

29. Our expression of gratitude should not consist in any other practices; the true path of such expression lies solely in our daily practice of Buddhism. This means that we practice without neglecting our lives day to day and without being absorbed in ourselves.

30. Time flies faster than an arrow, and life is more transient than the dew. With what skillful means or devices can we retrieve even a single day that has passed? A hundred years lived to no purpose are days and months to be regretted. It is to be but a pitiful bag of bones. Even if we live in abandon, as slaves to the senses for the days and months of a hundred years, if we take up practice for a single day therein, it is not only the practice of this life of a hundred years, but also salvation in the hundred years of another life. The life of this day is a life that should be esteemed, a bag of bones that should be honored. We should love and respect our bodies and minds, which undertake this practice. Depending on our practice, the practice of the buddhas is manifested, and the ◎ great way of the buddhas penetrates everywhere. Therefore, the practice of a single day is the seed of the buddhas, the practice of the buddhas.

31. These buddhas are the Buddha Shakyamuni. The Buddha Shakyamuni is “mind itself is buddha.” When buddhas of the past, present and future together fulfill buddhahood, they always become the Buddha Shakyamuni. This is “mind itself is buddha.” We should carefully investigate who is meant when we say ● “mind itself is buddha.” ● This is how we repay the blessings of the Buddha.