

The Most Excellent Mirror— Samādhi

The Buddhas and the Ancestors have all directly handed down
this basic Truth:—

Preserve well for you now have; this is all.

The white snow falls upon the silver plate,

The snowy heron in the bright moon hides;

Resembles each the other yet these two are not the same;

Combining them we can distinguish one from other.

Supreme mind, – in words, – can never be expressed

And yet to all the trainees' needs it does respond;

Enslaved by words you fall into a hole.

If you should go against the basic Truth – you come to a
dead-end.

This is as if a giant fire-ball;

Never come too close – nor put yourself too far away.

If you express by fancy words

It is all stained.

The night encloses brightness

And, at dawn, no light shines;

This Truth holds for beings all;

Through this we free ourselves from suffering.

Although not made by artifice,

This Truth can find expression in the words of those who teach
true Zen.

It is as if one looks into a jewelled mirror

Seeing both shadow and substance.

You are not him;

He is all of you.

A baby of this world is such as this,

Possessing all his five sense organs, – yet goes not and neither
comes, – neither arises nor yet stays, – has words and yet no
words.

Then finally we grasp nothing

For words inaccurate will be.

When stacked, six sticks of ri

For ever move in mutual relations in extremes and centre;

Stacked three times,
Return again to the first pattern after changes five.
This as the five tastes of the chi-grass seems
And as the diamond scepter's branches five.
The absolute "upright" holds, as it is,
Many phenomena within its own delicate balance.
When a trainee asks a question
Matching answer always comes from the Zen master.
So that he may bring the trainee to the ultimate of Truth
The master uses skillful means.
Trainees embrace the ultimate,
Masters contain the means;
Correctly blended,
This is good.
Avoid one- sided clinging;
This is all the natural and superior Truth – that does attach itself to
no delusion or enlightenment.
It calmly, clearly shows when all conditions ripen;
When minute infinitesimally small becomes; – when large it
transcends all dimension, space;
Even the slightest twitch will surely break the rhythm.
Now we have abrupt and slow – and separated do the sects become
by setting up of doctrines, practices,
And these become the standards that we know of all religious
conduct.
Even should we penetrate these doctrines, practices,
And then delusive consciousness flows through the 'ternal Truth,
– no progress shall we make.
If outwardly all calm we do appear – and yet within disturbed
should be
We are as if a tethered horse – or as a mouse within a cage.
So, – pitying this plight,
The former sages teaching all dispensed.
Because delusions in the trainees' minds were topsy-turvy,
All the sages true did match there to their teachings;
Thus they used all means, so varied,
Even so to say that black was white.
Delusive thought, if lost, abandoned,
Will all satisfaction bring;

If you in ancient footsteps wish to walk

Observe examples old.

That He could take the final step to true enlightenment,

A former Buddha trained Himself for ten long kalpas – gazing
at the Bodhi tree.

If thus restrained, freedom original

Is like a tiger that has tattered ears – or like a hobbled horse.

The sage will tell a trainee, who is feeling he is low and all
inferior,

That on his head there gleams a jewelled diadem, – and on his
body rich robes hang – and at his feet there is a footrest.

If the trainee hears this teaching with surprise and doubt,

The sage assures him that of cats there are some kinds, – as also
some white cows, – that perfect are just as they are.

A master archer hits a target at a hundred yards because he skill
possesses

But, to make to meet two arrows in mid-air, – head-on, – goes far
beyond the skill of ordinary man.

In this superior activity of no-mind,

See! the wooden figure sings – and the stone- maiden dances;

This is far beyond all common consciousness,

Beyond all thinking.

The retainer serves his lord the emperor;

His father does the child obey;

Without obedience there is no filial piety

And, if there is no service, no advice.

Such action and most unpretentious work

All foolish seem + and dull

But those who practice thus this law + continually shall, in all
worlds,

Be called Lord of Lords unto eternity.