

ZEN SOURCEBOOK

*Traditional Documents from  
China, Korea, and Japan*

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Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.  
Indianapolis/Cambridge

[named] person broke through the kōan on the sound of one hand. A number of these dragon-staff paintings still survive, testifying to Hakuin's continued work with lay followers even when more and more monks came to his small country temple for instruction.

Hakuin stressed that his monk pupils, after enlightenment, must continue with their post-enlightenment practice while returning to the world with great compassion. His Song of Meditation is an example of how he continued to take his teachings directly to everyday people, and it has become one of the best-known and most succinct expressions of Zen.

### Song of Meditation

All living beings are originally Buddhas, just like water and ice:  
Without water there is no ice, and outside living beings there is  
no Buddha.  
Not knowing how near it is, people seek it outside themselves—  
what a pity!  
Like someone in the middle of water crying out in thirst,  
Or the child of a rich man, wandering around like a beggar,  
We are bound to the six worlds because we are lost in the darkness  
of ignorance;  
Following dark path after dark path, when shall we escape birth  
and death?

The Zen meditation of Mahayana Buddhism is beyond all words  
of praise;  
The virtues of charity, morality, invoking the Buddha, repentance,  
training,  
And all other worthy actions have their source in meditation.  
Even those who sit in zazen only once will destroy evil karma;  
How then can there be false paths? The Pure Land is now very close.  
Listen with reverence to this teaching; praise, embrace it, and you  
will find merit;  
Better yet, look within and find the self-nature beyond the self,  
And you will transcend words and explanations.

When you open the gate of cause-and-effect,  
You will discover a path beyond duality or multiplicity;  
When you abide in the form that is no-form,  
Whether going or returning, you will always be at home;

When you take thought as non-thought,  
You will sing and dance to the music of Buddhist truth.  
Boundless as the sky, radiant as the moon is the fourfold wisdom;  
At this moment, what do you lack? Nirvana is right in front of you,  
This very place is the Lotus Land, this body is the body of Buddha.

—Translation by Stephen Addiss



Figure 20. Hakuin Ekaku, *The Sound of One Hand* (detail)