

Theme Enlightenment, Awakening, Bodhi, Liberation, Freedom from
the Cycle of Birth and Death

Buddha is Sanskrit for what we call aware, miraculously aware. Responding, perceiving, arching your brows, blinking your eyes, moving your hands and feet, it's all your miraculously aware nature. And this nature is the mind. And the mind is the buddha. And the buddha is the path. And the path is zen....Seeing your nature is zen. Unless you see your nature, it's not zen.

Bodhidharma

Bodhidharma. Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma. Translated by R. Pine. New York: Weatherhill, 1987.

The original enlightened understanding, which neither comes into being nor ceases to be, must be the basis of your practice. Then you will attain the awakening that will be the result of your practice.

Śūraṅgama Sutra

Śūraṅgama Sutra with Excerpts from the Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsüan Hua. Translated by Śūraṅgama Sutra Translation Committee. Ukiah, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2009.

Seeing through the mundane and witnessing the sublime is less than an eye-blink away. Realization is now. Why worry about gray hair?

Bodhidharma

Bodhidharma. Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma. Translated by R. Pine. New York: Weatherhill, 1987.

Were you to attain but a little progress in meditation practice, at the moment of death you would not be dragged under by the force of negative karma, even if you have not attained enlightenment in this lifetime.

The Mirror of Zen

Joeng, B. Mirror of Zen: The Classic Guide to Buddhist Practice by Zen Master So Sahn. Translated by H. Gak. Boston, MA: Shambhala, 2006.

To carry yourself forward and experience myriad things is delusion. That myriad things come forward and experience themselves is awakening.

Dogen

Dogen. Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dogen. Translated by K. Tanahashi. New York: North Point Press, 1985.

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One must all-at-once awaken to intrinsic purity to attain intrinsic liberation and engage in step-by-step practice so as to attain purity that results from the removal of stain and the liberation resulting from the removal of hindrances, becoming perfectly pure and in ultimate liberation. Free from obstruction in both mind and body, one is then identical to Śakyamuni Buddha.

Guifeng Zongmi

Broughton, J. L. Zongmi on Chan. New York: Columbia University, 2009.

All that you need to do is not allow your attention to be diverted....Next, extricate one [sense] faculty by detaching it from its objects, and redirect that faculty inward so that it can return to what is original and true. Then it will radiate the light of the original understanding. This brilliant light will shine forth and extricate the other five faculties until they are completely free.

Śuraṅgama Sutra

Śurangama Sutra with Excerpts from the Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsüan Hua. Translated by Śurangama Sutra Translation Committee. Ukiah, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2009.

First, I redirected my hearing inward in order to enter the current of the sages. Then external sounds disappeared. With the direction of my hearing reversed and with sounds stilled, both sounds and silence cease to arise. So it was that, as I gradually progressed, what I heard and my awareness of what I heard came to an end. Even when that state of mind in which everything had come to an end disappeared I did not rest. My awareness and the objects of my awareness were emptied and when that process of emptying my awareness was wholly complete then even that emptying and what had been emptied vanished. Coming into being and ceasing to be themselves ceased to be. Then the ultimate stillness was revealed. All of a sudden I transcended the worlds of ordinary beings and I also transcended the worlds of beings who have transcended the ordinary worlds.

Śuraṅgama Sutra

Śurangama Sutra with Excerpts from the Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsüan Hua. Translated by Śurangama Sutra Translation Committee. Ukiah, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 2009.

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Deluded, a buddha is a being
enlightened a being is a buddha
a foolish buddha is a being
a wise being is a buddha
a biased buddha is a being
an unbiased being is a buddha
as long as your mind is biased
the buddha dwells in a being
the moment you wake up unbiased
a being becomes a buddha
your mind contains a buddha
your buddha is the real one
if you didn't have the buddha-mind
where would you go to find a buddha?

Platform Sutra

Platform Sutra: The Zen Teaching of Hui-neng. Translated by R. Pine. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2006.

You must rise above
The gloomy clouds
Covering the mountaintop.
Otherwise, how will you
Ever see the brightness?

Ryokan

Ryokan. Dewdrops on a Lotus Leaf: Zen Poems of Ryokan. J. Stevens, trans. Boston and London: Shambhala, 2004

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Everything that appears in the three realms [of samsara] comes from the mind...Beyond this mind you'll never find another buddha. To search for enlightenment or nirvana beyond this mind is impossible. The reality of your own self-nature, the absence of cause and effect, is what's meant by mind. Your mind is nirvana. You might think you can find a buddha or enlightenment somewhere beyond the mind but such a place doesn't exist.

Bodhidharma

Bodhidharma. Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma. Translated by R. Pine. New York: Weatherhill, 1987.

Maintain the same state of mind in every moment of thought, in every phase of mental activity. Do not enjoy the present while planting the seeds of future suffering – by doing so you only deceive yourself and others and cannot escape from the realm of birth and death. Make effort! Make effort! Although it may seem futile now, your present efforts constitute the causes for your future enlightenment. Do not let time pass in vain while only wasting energy.

Treatise on the Essentials of
Cultivating the Mind

In McRae, J. R. Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism (Studies in East Asian Buddhism 3 ed.). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986.

Mahākāśyapa long ago caused his cognitive faculty to cease and, yet, without relying on the thinking mind, his understanding is clear and perfect. Once all your faculties are completely disengaged, a pure brilliance will shine forth from within them. Then all coarse perceived objects – indeed all phenomena subject to change in the material world – will be transformed, just as ice is transformed when it melts in hot water. Then, responding in the time it takes for a single thought to arise, all phenomena will merge into your supreme awareness.

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When the mind stops moving, it enters nirvana. Nirvana is an empty mind. Where delusions don't exist, buddhas reach nirvana. Where afflictions don't exist, bodhisattvas enter the place of

Bodhidharma

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The most essential method, which includes all other methods, is beholding the mind....The mind is the root from which all things grow. If you can understand the mind, everything else is included....Those who understand the mind reach enlightenment with minimal effort. Those who don't understand the mind practice in vain. Everything good and bad comes from your own mind. To find something beyond the mind is impossible.

Bodhidharma

Bodhidharma. Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma. Translated by R. Pine. New York: Weatherhill, 1987.

Nirvana means no birth and no death. It's beyond birth and death and beyond nirvana. When the mind stops moving, it enters nirvana. Nirvana is an empty mind. Where delusions don't exist, buddhas reach nirvana. Where afflictions don't exist, bodhisattvas enter the place of enlightenment.

Bodhidharma

Bodhidharma. Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma. Translated by R. Pine. New York: Weatherhill, 1987.

Where beauty is, then there is ugliness;
Where right is, also there is wrong.
Knowledge and ignorance are interdependent;
Delusion and enlightenment condition each other.
Since olden times it has been so.
How could it be otherwise now?
Wanting to get rid of one and grab the other
Is merely realizing a scene of stupidity.
Even if you speak of the wonder in it all,
how do yo deal with each thing changing?

Ryokan

Kazuaki Tanahashi and Tensho David Schneider, ed. Essential Zen. Castle Books, 1996.

Always acting alone, walking alone,
Together the enlightened travel the nirvana road.

Song of Enlightenment

Hongzhi Zhengjue. Silent Illumination. In Sheng Yen, The Poetry of Enlightenment: Poems of Ancient Ch'an Masters. Elmhurst, NY: Dharm Drum Publications, 1987.