

According harmoniously with the conditions of your present lives, you should go on, as opportunities arise, reducing the store of old karma laid up in previous lives; and above all, you must avoid building up a fresh store of retribution for yourselves.

Huangbo

Huangbo. *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po: On the Transmission of Mind*. Translated by John Blofeld. New York: Grove Press, 1958.

A buddha is free of karma, free of cause and effect.

Bodhidharma

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

Our lives are circumscribed by dust  
we're like bugs inside a bowl  
going in circles all day long  
never leaving our bowl  
eternal life is beyond our reach  
afflictions never end  
the months and years flow by  
suddenly we're old men

Han Shan

Han Shan. *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain*. Translated by R. Pine, Trans. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2000.

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.

Action [karma] and misery [samsara] having ceased, there is nirvana.  
Action and misery come from conceptual thought.  
This comes from mental fabrication.  
Fabrication ceases through emptiness.

Nagarjuna

Nagarjuna. (1995). *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way: Nagarjuna's Mulamadhyamakakarika*. Translated by J. Garfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

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.

Mortals keep creating karma and mistakenly insist that there's no retribution. But can they deny suffering? Can they deny that what the present state of mind sows the next state of mind reaps? How can they escape? But if the present state of mind sows nothing, the next state of mind reaps nothing. Don't misconceive karma.

Bodhidharma

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

When will the treadmill of life and death stop  
each rebirth gets more confusing  
until we discover the jewel of our mind  
we're like blind mules following our feet

Han Shan

Han Shan. The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain. Translated by R. Pine, Trans. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2000.

Once mortals see their nature, all attachments end. Awareness isn't hidden but you can only find it right now. It's only now. If you really want to find the Way, don't hold on to anything. Once you put an end to karma and nurture your awareness, any attachments that remain will come to an end. Understanding comes naturally. You don't have to make any effort.

Bodhidharma

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

Today I sat before the cliffs  
I sat until the mist drew off  
a single crystal stream  
a towering ridge of jade  
a cloud's dawn shadow not yet moving  
the moon's night light still adrift  
a body free of dust  
a mind without a care

Han Shan

Han Shan. *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain*. Translated by R. Pine, Trans. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2000.

Were you now to practice keeping your minds motionless at all times – whether walking, standing, sitting or lying; concentrating entirely upon the goal of no thought-creation, no duality, no reliance on others and no attachments; just allowing all things to take their course the whole day long, as though you were too ill to bother; unknown to the world; innocent of any urge to be known or unknown to others; with your minds like blocks of stone that mend no holes – then all the dharmas [laws of existence] would penetrate your understanding through and through. In a little while you would find yourselves firmly unattached. Thus for the first time in your lives you would discover your reactions to phenomena decreasing and, ultimately, you would pass beyond the Triple World; and people would say that a Buddha had appeared in the world. Pure and passionless knowledge [enlightenment] implies putting an end to the ceaseless flow of thoughts and images, for in that way you stop creating the karma that leads to rebirth – whether as gods or men or as sufferers in hell.

Huangbo

Huangbo. *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po: On the Transmission of Mind*. Translated by John Blofeld. New York: Grove Press, 1958.

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.

Observe that all conditioned phenomena in the world are unstationary and are subject to instantaneous transformation and destruction, that all activities of the mind arise and are extinguished from moment to moment, that all of these induce suffering.

Things are unborn ("before thinking") in their essential nature.

There is retribution of good and evil karma from causes and conditions.

The essential nature of things is unobtainable by intellectual analysis.

Awakening of Faith in the  
Mahayana

Yoshito S. Hakeda, ed. *The Awakening of Faith: Attributed to Asvagosha*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967.

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.

Once you stop clinging and let things be, you'll be free, even of birth and death. You'll transform everything. You'll possess spiritual powers that can't be obstructed. And you'll be at peace wherever you are. If you doubt this, you'll never see through anything....Once you see your nature, you're a buddha....

Bodhidharma

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

What is beyond all measure is inexpressible. And what is inexpressible does not arise [in the mind]. And what does not arise does not cease. And what does not cease is completely still. And what is completely still is essentially nirvana. And what is essentially nirvana is neither a result nor a cause.

Lankavatara Sutra

Lankavatara Sutra. Translated by R. Pine. Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2012.

Since I escaped to Cold Mountain  
I've lived on mountain fruit  
What worries does life hold  
this time I'm following karma  
days and months are like a stream  
Time is but a spark  
Heaven and Earth can change  
I'm happy here in the cliffs

Han Shan

Han Shan. *The Collected Songs of Cold Mountain*. Translated by R. Pine, Trans. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2000.

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.

Great is the matter of birth and death.  
Life slips quickly by.  
Time waits for no one.  
Wake up! Wake up!  
Don't waste a minute.

Hakuin