

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.

So, full understanding can come to you through an inexpressible mystery. The approach to it is called the Gateway of the stillness beyond all activity. If you wish to understand, know that a sudden comprehension comes when the mind has been purged of all the clutter of conceptual and discriminatory thought-activity. Those who seek the truth by means of intellect and learning only get further and further from it. Not till your thoughts cease all their branching here and there, not till you abandon all thoughts of seeking for something, not till your mind is motionless as wood or stone, will you be on the right road to the Gate.

Huangbo

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

Not thinking about anything is zen. Once you know this, walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, everything you do is zen.

Bodhidharma

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

Every day, whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down, and in all your speech, remain detached from everything within the sphere of phenomena. Whether you speak or merely blink an eye, let it be done with complete dispassion....most students of Zen cling to all sorts of sounds and forms. Why do they not copy me by letting each thought go as though it were nothing, or as though it were a piece of rotten wood, a stone, or the cold ashes of a dead fire? Or else, by just making whatever slight response is suited to each occasion?

Huangbo

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

A quiet fills my three-matted hut.
All day long, not a soul appears.
I sit at the window and meditate...
the sound of falling leaves.

Ryokan

Ryokan. *The Kanshi Poems of Taigu Ryokan*. Translated by Larry Smith and Mei Hui Liu Huang. Bottom Dog Press, 2009.

When a person's mind has no thoughts and is fundamentally empty and still and free of false views, this is the greatest of all causes – which occurs when you aren't confused about the inside or the outside, when you are free of dualities. If you're confused about the outside, you're attached to forms. If you're confused about the inside, you're attached to emptiness. To be free of form amid forms and to be free of emptiness amid emptiness, this is when you aren't confused about the inside or the outside.

Platform Sutra

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

Spring water is pure in an emerald stream
moonlight is white on Cold Mountain
silence thoughts and the spirit becomes clear
focus on emptiness and the world grows still

Han Shan

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

Having made such a vow, [you] must, in accordance with [your] capacity and without faltering, practice every kind of good at all times and at all places and not be slothful in [your] mind. Except when [you sit] in concentration in the practice of cessation [you] should at all times reflect upon what should be done and what should not be done.

Awakening of Faith

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

Theme Not thinking

As a result of repeatedly cultivating nondiscriminating knowledge and eliminating the coarseness of the two obstacles [of thoughts and emotions] in root consciousness, one is therefore able to transmute and destroy samsara which is supported by suchness, and transmute and realize nirvana, which is supported by suchness. This is true suchness apart from the nature of defilement.

Xuanzang

Francis Cook. Three Texts On Consciousness Only. Numata Center for Buddhist Translation, 1999.

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.

The path of words is cut off.
There is no past, no future, no present.

Faith in Mind

Sheng Yen, The Poetry of Enlightenment: Poems by Ancient Ch'an Masters. Elmhurst, NY: Dharm Drum Publications.

Thought after thought, not to become attached. Whether it's a past thought, a present thought, or a future thought, let one thought follow another without interruption...When you go from one thought to another don't become attached to any dharma [phenomenon]. Once one thought becomes attached, every thought becomes attached which is what we call bondage. But when you go from one thought to another without becoming attached to any dharma, there's no bondage.

Platform Sutra

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

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.

Hence, you should stop searching for phrases and chasing after words. Take the backward step and turn the light inward. Your body-mind of itself will drop off and your original face will appear....Let go of all involvements and let myriad things rest. Do not think good or bad. Do not judge right or wrong. Stop conscious endeavour and analytic introspection. Do not try to become a buddha. How could being a buddha be limited to sitting or not sitting?...Know that the true dharma [ultimate reality] emerges of itself, clearing away hindrances and distractions.

Dogen

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

Keep your heart clear and transparent
 And you'll never be bound.
 A single disturbed thought, though,
 Creates ten thousand distractions.
 Let myriad things captivate you
 And you'll go further and further astray.
 How painful to see people
 All wrapped up in themselves.

Ryokan

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

I sit on top of a boulder
 the stream is icy cold
 quiet joys hold a special charm
 bare cliffs in the fog enchant
 this is such a restful place
 the sun goes down and tree shadows sprawl
 I watch the ground of my mind
 and a lotus comes out of the mud

Han Shan

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

Those who seek learning gain every day
 those who seek the Way lose every day
 they lose and they lose
 until they find nothing to do
 nothing to do means nothing not done...

Daodejing

Lao-Tzu's *Taoteching*. Translated by R. Pine. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2009.

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.

And when inside and outside are perfectly clear you will know your own mind. And once you know your own mind you will be free. And once you have gained your freedom, this is the samadhi of prajñā [wisdom]. And the realization of the samadhi of prajñā is no-thought.

Platform Sutra

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

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

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

The Zen meditation tradition handed down from the patriarchs teaches, however, that when all traces of thinking are cut off, the principle of emptiness appears clearly, of itself, as the very origin of

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.

Turn around the light to shine within, then just return.

Shitou Xiqian

Shitou Xiqian. *Song of the Grass-Roof Hermitage*. In B. Connelly, *Inside the Grass Hut: Living Shitou's Classic Zen Poem*. Translated by T. Leighton, & K. Tanahashi. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2014.

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.

All thoughts, as soon as they are conjured up, are to be discarded, and even the thought of discarding them is to be put away, for all things are essentially in the state of transcending thoughts, and are not to be created from moment to moment nor to be extinguished from moment to moment.

Awakening of Faith

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

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.

Many people are afraid to empty their minds lest they may plunge into the Void. They do not know that their own Mind is the Void. The ignorant eschew phenomena but not thought; the wise eschew thought but not phenomena.

Huangbo

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

...[O]ne refrains from becoming either worried or fearful. Neither does one grasp at them or actively reject them or commit the error of indulging in making any calculations or mental discriminations with regard to them. By putting the mind to rest and causing it to abide in quiescence, they should naturally disappear of their own accord.

Zhiyi

Zhiyi. *Essentials for Practicing Calming-and-Insight and Dhyana Meditation*. Translated by B. Dharmamitra. Seattle, WA: Kalavinka Press, 2008.

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.

Stay in a quiet place and sit erect in an even temper. Focus your attention neither on breathing nor on any form or colour, nor on empty space, earth, water, fire, wind, nor even on what has been seen, heard, remembered, or conceived. All thoughts, as soon as they are conjured up, are to be discarded, and even the thought of discarding them is to be put away. For all things are essentially in the state of transcending thoughts, and are not to be created from moment to moment nor to be extinguished from moment to moment. Thus conform to the essential nature of Reality through this practice of cessation. It is not that you should first meditate on the objects of the senses in the external world and then negate them with your mind, the mind that has meditated on them. If the mind wanders away, it should be brought back and fixed in "correct thought." It should be understood that this "correct thought" is the thought that whatever is, is mind only and that there is no external world of objects as conceived. Even this mind is devoid of any marks of its own which would indicate its substantiality and therefore is not substantially conceivable as such at any moment.

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.

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.

Śūraṅgama 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.

Bodhidharma and Huiko

Huiko: My mind is not at peace. Please pacify it for me.

Bodhidharma: Bring your mind here and I will pacify it for you.

Huiko: I have searched for my mind but it is completely imperceptible.

Bodhidharma: I have now completely pacified your mind for you.

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.

Sages don't consider the past. And they don't worry about the future. Nor do they cling to the present. And from moment to moment they follow the Way.

Bodhidharma

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

Even if you consume as many books
As the sands of the Ganges
It is not as good as really catching
One verse of Zen.
If you want the secret of Buddhism,
Here it is: everything is in the heart!

Ryokan

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

To be unaffected by any object is what is meant by no thought, to be free of objects in our thoughts and not to give rise to thoughts about dharmas [things].

Platform Sutra

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

The most divine knowledge of God, that which comes through unknowing, is achieved in a union far beyond mind, when mind turns away from all things, even from itself, and when it is made one with the dazzling rays, being then and there enlightened by the inscrutable depth of Wisdom. Just as the senses can neither grasp nor perceive the things of the mind, just as representation and shape cannot take in the simple and the shapeless, just as corporeal form cannot lay hold of the intangible and incorporeal, by the same standard of truth beings are surpassed by the infinity beyond being, intelligences by that oneness which is beyond intelligence. Indeed the inscrutable One is out of the reach of every rational process.

Meister Eckhart

Meister Eckhart. *Meister Eckhart: Selected Writings*. Translated by O. Davies. London: Penguin Books, 1994.

I reached Cold Mountain and all cares stopped
no idle thoughts remained in my head
nothing to do I write poems on rocks
and trust the current like an unmoored boat

Han Shan

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

Whether walking, standing, sitting, lying or rising, the practitioner should practice both cessation and insight side by side.

Seek the correct faith with courage and strength.

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.

The sacred radiance of our original nature never darkens.
It has shone forth since beginningless time.
Do you wish to enter the gate that leads to this?
Simply do not give rise to conceptual thinking.

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.