



Verses on the Faith-Mind Seng t'san (Third Patriarch of Zen)

1. The Perfect Way knows no difficulties
Except that it refuses to make preferences;
Only when freed from hate and love,
It reveals itself fully and without disguise;
A tenth of an inch's difference,
And heaven and earth are set apart;
If you wish to see it before your own eyes,
Have no fixed thoughts either for or against it.
2. To set up what you like against what you dislike—
This is the disease of the mind:
When the deep meaning [of the Way] is not understood
Peace of mind is disturbed to no purpose.
3. [The Way is] perfect like unto vast space,
With nothing wanting, nothing superfluous:
It is indeed due to making choice
That its suchness is lost sight of.
4. Pursue not the outer entanglements,
Dwell not in the inner void;
Be serene in the oneness of things,
And [dualism] vanishes by itself.
5. When you strive to gain quiescence by stopping motion,
The quiescence thus gained is ever in motion;
As long as you tarry in the dualism,
How can you realize oneness?
6. And when oneness is not thoroughly understood,
In two ways loss is sustained:
The denying of reality is the asserting of it,
And the asserting of emptiness is the denying of it.
7. Wordiness and intellection—
The more with them the further astray we go;
Away therefore with wordiness and intellection,
And there is no place where we cannot pass freely.
8. When we return to the root, we gain the meaning;

When we pursue external objects, we lose the reason.
The moment we are enlightened within,
We go beyond the voidness of a world confronting us.

9. Transformations going on in an empty world which confronts us
Appear real all because of Ignorance:
Try not to seek after the true,
Only cease to cherish opinions.

10. Abide not with dualism,
Carefully avoid pursuing it;
As soon as you have right and wrong,
Confusion ensues, and Mind' is lost.

11. The two exist because of the One,
But hold not even to this One;
When a mind is not disturbed,
The ten thousand things offer no offence.

12. No offence offered, and no ten thousand things;
No disturbance going, and no mind set up to work:
The subject is quieted when the object ceases,
The object ceases when the subject is quieted.

13. The object is an object for the subject,
The subject is a subject for the object:
Know that the relativity of the two
Rests ultimately on one Emptiness.

14. In one Emptiness the two are not distinguished,
And each contains in itself all the ten thousand things;
When no discrimination is made between this and that.
How can a one-sided and prejudiced view arise?

15. The Great Way is calm and large-hearted,
For it nothing is easy, nothing is hard;
Small views are irresolute,
The more in haste the tardier they go.

16. Clinging is never kept within bounds,
It is sure to go the wrong way;
Quit it, and things follow their own courses,
While the Essence neither departs nor abides.

17. Obey the nature of things, and you are in concord with the Way,
Calm and easy and free from annoyance;
But when your thoughts are tied, you turn away from the truth,
They grow heavier and duller and are not at all sound.

18. When they are not sound, the spirit is troubled;
What is the use of being partial and one-sided then?

If you want to walk the course of the One Vehicle,
Be not prejudiced against the six sense-objects.

19. When you are not prejudiced against the six sense-objects,
You are then one with the Enlightenment;
The wise are non-active,
While the ignorant bind themselves up;
While in the Dharma itself there is no individuation,
They ignorantly attach themselves to particular objects.
It is their own mind that creates illusions —
Is this not the greatest of all self-contradictions?

20. The ignorant cherish the idea of rest and unrest,
The enlightened have no likes and dislikes:
All forms of dualism
Are contrived by the ignorant themselves.
They are like unto visions and flowers in the air;
Why should we trouble ourselves to take hold of them?
Gain and loss, right and wrong--
Away with them once for all!

21. If an eye never falls asleep,
All dreams will by themselves cease:
If the Mind retains its absoluteness,
The ten thousand things are of one Suchness.

22. When the deep mystery of one Suchness is fathomed,
All of a sudden we forget the external entanglements;
When the ten thousand things are viewed in their oneness,
We return to the origin and remain where we ever have been.

23. Forget the wherefore of things,
And we attain to a state beyond analogy;
Movement stopped and there is no movement,
Rest set in motion and there is no rest;
When dualism does no more obtain,
Oneness itself abides not.

24. The ultimate end of things where they cannot go any further
Is not bound by rules and measures:
In the Mind harmonious [with the Way] we have the principle of identity,
In which we find all strivings quieted;
Doubts and irresolutions are completely done away with,
And the right faith is straightened;
There is nothing left behind, There is nothing retained,
All is void, lucid, and self-illuminating;
There is no exertion, no waste of energy —
This is where thinking never attains,
This is where the imagination fails to measure.

25. In the higher realm of true Suchness
There is neither “self” nor “other”:
When direct identification is sought,
We can only say, “Not two”.

26. In being “not two” all is the same,
All that is is comprehended in it;
The wise in the ten quarters,
They all enter into this Absolute Reason.

27. This Absolute Reason is beyond quickening [time] and extending [space],
For it one instant is ten thousand years;
Whether we see it or not,
It is manifest everywhere in all the ten quarters.

28. Infinitely small things are as large as large things can be,
For here no external conditions obtain;
Infinitely large things are as small as small things can be,
For objective limits are here of no consideration.

29. What is is the same as what is not,
What is not is the same as what is:
Where this state of things fails to obtain,
Indeed, no tarrying there.

30. One in All,
All in One —
If only this is realized,
No more worry about your not being perfect!

31. Where Mind and each believing mind are not divided,
And undivided are each believing mind and Mind,
This is where words fail;
For it is not of the past, present, and future.

D.T. Suzuki. *Manual of Zen Buddhism*. Kyoto: Eastern Buddhist Society, 1934. This text is in the public domain.

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