



On Zen Dai-o Kokushi

There is a reality even prior to heaven and earth;
Indeed, it has no form, much less a name;
Eyes fail to see it; It has no voice for ears to detect;
To call it Mind or Buddha violates its nature,
For it then becomes like a visionary flower in the air;
It is not Mind, nor Buddha;
Absolutely quiet, and yet illuminating in a mysterious way,
It allows itself to be perceived only by the clear-eyed.
It is Dharma truly beyond form and sound;
It is Tao having nothing to do with words.

Wishing to entice the blind,
The Buddha has playfully let words escape his golden mouth;
Heaven and earth are ever since filled with entangling briars.

O my good worthy friends gathered here,
If you desire to listen to the thunderous voice of the Dharma,
Exhaust your words, empty your thoughts,
For then you may come to recognize this One Essence.
Says Hui the Brother, “The Buddha’s Dharma
Is not to be given up to mere human sentiments.”

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

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