

## On ‘The Rippling of a Valley Stream, The Contour of a Mountain’

*(Keisei Sanshoku)*

**Translator’s Introduction:** Dōgen’s discourse on “The Rippling of a Valley Stream, the Contour of a Mountain” is centered on the nature of a kenshō, that is, the experiencing of one’s Buddha Nature. In the first half of his discourse, he focuses on the topic of the external condition which serves as a trigger or catalyst for this experience when the disciple is spiritually open and ready for the kenshō to occur. This trigger may be something heard (a valley stream) or seen (springtime blossoms) or felt (the stubbing of a toe). It may be some event occurring in nature, or it may be some gesture or remark that a Master may make upon sensing the ‘ripeness’ of his disciple. Such a trigger is not the cause of the kenshō occurring, but it is an integral part of the kenshō process. This trigger is a requisite form of external conditions in which someone or something gives voice to the Dharma—that is, gives expression (as, in reality, all things are always doing) to That which is beyond duality—and the trainee, ‘hearing’ this, makes the connection between the Source of this voicing and his own Original Nature.

The second half of the talk examines various obstacles that may interfere with the kenshō occurring, with emphasis given to the pursuit of personal fame and gain.

The Buddhas and Ancestors have been many indeed. Their deeds are instructive for teaching others the Way to supreme enlightenment. Among those deeds are not a few examples of ‘bone-crushing’ diligence. For instance, you can draw instruction from the Second Ancestor Eka’s ‘severing of his arm’.<sup>1</sup> And do not miss the meaning behind the Buddha’s action in a previous life when He covered the mud with His long hair.<sup>2</sup> Once each of you has succeeded in ‘removing your husk’,<sup>3</sup> and you are no longer attached to any prior intellectual

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1. ‘Cutting off one’s arm’ is being used metaphorically to refer to giving up one’s willfulness at all costs. Such a ‘severing’ is done by applying Manjushri’s Sword of Wise Discernment. Dōgen is not recommending self-mutilation.
  2. Shakyamuni Buddha was an ascetic monk then. He spread his long hair over a mud puddle so that the Buddha of that time could cross the mud without staining Himself. This serves as an allusion to the willingness to go to whatever lengths are necessary, however humbling, so that one’s Buddha Nature may traverse the Path unsullied. As with the previous example, Dōgen is not encouraging blind imitation of a physical act, but pointing to an understanding of the intention behind the action.
  3. Or, in idiomatic English, ‘taking your blinders off’.

understanding, the Matter\* which had been unclear to you for ever so long will immediately emerge before you. The very 'nowness' of this is beyond anything I know of, beyond anyone's ability to comprehend intellectually, beyond all your expectations, even beyond a Buddha's Eye to catch a glimpse of. So how can it possibly be fathomed by any human speculations?



In Great Sung China there was a lay Buddhist called Tōba. His family name was So, his official name was Shoku, and his name as an adult was Shisen. He must have been a veritable dragon in the sea of letters, for he had trained under dragon elephants in the ocean of Buddhism.<sup>4</sup> Swimming in the fathomless waters of Buddhism, he would soar up through the cloud banks to plunge once again into the depths of that ocean. Then there came a time when, whilst on a visit to Mount Ro,<sup>5</sup> he was struck by the sound of the valley stream rippling through the night, and he awoke to the Way. He composed the following poem about the experience, which he presented to Meditation Master Jōsō:

*The valley stream's rippling is indeed the eloquent  
tongue of Buddha:  
The mountain's contour is not other than that of the  
body of Buddha.  
With the coming of night, I heard the eighty-four  
thousand songs,<sup>6</sup>  
But with the rising of the sun, how am I ever to offer  
them to you?*

Upon his presenting this poem to Meditation Master Jōsō, the Master said in approval, "Just so!" Master Jōsō is Meditation Master Shōkaku Jōsō, who was the Dharma heir of Meditation Master Ōryū Enan, who, in turn, was the Dharma heir of Meditation Master Jimyō Soen.

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\* See *Glossary*.

4. As used here, the word 'dragon' by itself refers to someone markedly brilliant. The term 'dragon elephant' is explained in the *Glossary*.
5. The home of many notable literary figures of his day.
6. In Buddhism, 'eighty-four thousand' represents both the number of atoms in a human body and the number of forms of illumination assumed by Amitabha Buddha, the Buddha of Immeasurable Light.

There was also a time when layman Tōba had a spiritual interview with the Great Priest Ryōgen Butchin. The latter, investing Tōba with the Buddha seal,\* gave him a monk's Dharma robe and the Buddhist Precepts, among other things. Layman Tōba, from then on, trained in the Way whilst wrapped in the kesa.\* Out of respect and reverence, Tōba presented Butchin with a priceless jeweled sash. People at the time commented that this was not something that an ordinary, everyday person would possibly think of doing.

The situation was such that Tōba's awakening to the Way upon hearing the valley stream was, undoubtedly, due partly to the condition of its sound flowing through the night. How sad that so many countless times the voicing of the Dharma by the manifest body of Buddha has escaped our notice. What, moreover, do you see when you view the contour of a mountain, or hear when you listen to the sound of the valley stream? Is it a single phrase you hear, or half a phrase, or the whole eighty-four thousand songs?

What a pity that Its sound and form lie within the landscape, unseen. And how glad we will be for the occasion and conditions when It reveals Itself in the landscape! 'His giving tongue to' is never remiss, for how can the contours of His Body be subject to a temporal existence and dissolution? Nevertheless, when It comes into sight, we learn how very near It has always been: when It is lying unseen, how are we to learn how near It really is? Are Its sound and form the whole of It or are they but half of It? In past springs and autumns, Tōba had not seen or heard the Water. Then, on the occasion of a single night, he was just able to see the Mountain and hear the rippling of Its stream. Now you bodhisattvas\* training in the Way, too, should open wide the gate to your training and enter by means of the verse, "That which flows is the Mountain: That which does not flow is the Water."

On the day preceding the night that this layman Tōba awoke to the Way, he had gone to Meditation Master Shōkaku Jōsō to ask him about the kōan\* story concerning the non-sentient giving voice to the Dharma.<sup>7</sup> Although he had not yet directly understood what the Master meant when he spoke on that occasion of 'turning oneself around', nevertheless, upon his hearing the rippling of the valley stream, it was as though the swirling waters had struck the very heavens. Thus it was that the sound of the stream now startled Tōba. But was it the voice of the stream or was it what had poured forth from his Master Jōsō's lips? Perhaps Jōsō's comment that the Non-sentient gives voice to the Dharma had not yet ceased to

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7. Here, 'non-sentient' carries a double meaning. On one level it refers to anything that is not a sentient being and, on another level, to That which transcends the duality of sentient and non-sentient.

reverberate in Tōba, and, unbeknownst to Tōba, had intermingled with the sound of the stream's rippling through the night. Who will say, upon discerning It, that It is 'a whole dipperful', or who will say, upon flowing into It, that It is 'a whole oceanful'? In short, was it layman Tōba who awakened to the Way or was it the landscape that awakened to the Way? What person is clear of eye and yet fails to quickly spot His eloquent tongue and His immaculate body?



As another example, at one time Meditation Master Kyōgen Chikan was training at Mount Daii in the community of Isan Reiyū. Isan said to him, "You are a learned scholar of considerable intelligence. So, without having to rely on what you have memorized from commentaries, surely you should be able to explain for me in your own words what the phrase 'before "father" and "mother" were born'\* means."

However many times he tried, Kyōgen was unable to do so. Deeply ashamed of himself, he consulted all the Scripture books and their commentaries that he had amassed over the years, but he was still left at wit's end. Finally, he took a torch and burned the writings he had previously collected, saying, "A rice cake in a painting will never satisfy one's hunger! I swear that I will no longer crave after the Buddha's Teachings in this lifetime, but will just be a kitchen monk who serves up the rice and gruel."

And so he served up the rice and gruel as the months and years went by. 'The monk who serves up the rice and gruel' refers to one who serves meals to his fellow monks. It is like the person in our country who dishes out the food. After having worked in this way for many years, he remarked to Isan, "Dunce that I am, I am still in the dark, unable to find the words to speak. O Reverend Monk, please say something to help me." Isan responded, "It is not that I refuse to say anything for your sake, but I fear that later on you would come to resent me for it."

And so, several more years passed, and Kyōgen went to visit the site where the National Teacher Echū had lived. Arriving at Mount Butō, he collected up grass and built himself a hermit's hut on the spot where the National Teacher's hermitage had stood. He planted some bamboo, which served as his sole companion. One day, whilst intent on sweeping his walkway clean, he accidentally sent a piece of tile flying, which hit the bamboo. Upon hearing the knocking sound it made, he suddenly had a great awakening. He bathed himself and, abstaining from anything physical or mental that might be sullyng, he turned in the direction of Mount Daii to offer incense and reverently bow. Then, as though facing Isan himself, he said, "O Great Monk Isan, if long ago you had said something to me

for my sake, how would I now have had this experience? My indebtedness to you is so deep that it surpasses even that which I owe to my parents.” He ended by composing the following poem:

*At one blow, I have forgotten all that I had learned with  
my head.*

*Truly, I myself am no longer the one in control.*

*Breaking out in a smile, I make my way along the Old  
Path,*

*Neither looking down in moments of despair*

*Nor leaving behind, here and there, traces of where I  
have been.*

*Only a dignified manner remains, which lies beyond  
anything heard or seen.*

*Those everywhere who have realized the Way,*

*All as one, say it is the moment supreme.*

When he presented this poem to Isan, the latter said, “This disciple has struck Home.”



As still another example, Meditation Master Reiun Shigon had trained and practiced for thirty years. Then one day, whilst ‘swimming about’, visiting mountain monasteries,<sup>8</sup> he took a rest at the foot of a mountain, when in the distance he spied a village. It was spring at the time, and, glimpsing the peach blossoms in bloom there, he suddenly awoke to the Way. Composing a poem, he presented it to Isan:

*Thirty years I sought for Him, the Good Friend with His  
Sword of Wisdom:*

*For so many rounds have the leaves fallen and the  
branches burst anew with blooms!*

*But just one glance at those peach blossoms*

*And straightaway—at that very moment—I arrived, never  
again to be in doubt.*

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8. It was customary at the time for monks who had not yet had a kenshō to visit other monasteries for the summer retreat.

Isan said, “The person who enters the Truth by way of some external condition is not likely to ever retreat from It or lose It.” Thereupon, he gave his approval to Reiun.

Is there anyone who has not entered by way of some external condition? Is there anyone who, once having entered, would retreat from this Place, or lose It? This is not something that applies to Reiun and Reiun alone. Ultimately he inherited the Dharma from Isan. Were it not that the contour of the mountain is the Pure Body of Buddha, how could a thing like this possibly happen?



Also, Meditation Master Chōsa Keishin was asked by a certain monk, “How is it possible to change the great earth with its mountains and rivers so that we make it return to the True Self?”

The Master responded, “No, the question is, ‘How is it possible to change ourselves so that we make It return to the great earth with its mountains and rivers?’”

What is being said here is that the True Self is, in Its own right, the True Self. Even though we speak of the Self as being ‘the great earth with its mountains and rivers’, this is not something that should delude us as to what is returned to.

Similarly, the monk Egaku, who was a Dharma descendant of Nangaku, was once asked by Shison, a lecturer in the scholastic tradition, “How is it possible for one’s Original Nature, which is immaculate, to all at once produce something as polluted as the great earth with its mountains and rivers?”

The monk pointed out in response, “Since our Original Nature is immaculate, how does It, all at once, produce the Great Earth with Its mountains and rivers?”

We must realize here that we are not to make the mistake of taking ‘the Great Earth with Its mountains and rivers in their immaculate Original Nature’ to be the great earth with its mountains and rivers. Yet, scholars who simply take Scriptures literally have never even dreamt of this, and consequently do not comprehend what ‘the Great Earth with Its mountains and rivers’ signifies.

We must understand that were Original Nature not the contour of a mountain and the rippling of a valley stream, then Shakyamuni would not have begun His voicing of the Dharma by holding a flower aloft, nor would Eka’s reaching the Very Marrow of what Bodhidharma was teaching have come about. Because of the merit that comes to fruition in the rippling of a stream and the contour of a mountain, the great earth and its sentient beings simultaneously realize the Way,

and there are Buddhas, such as Shakyamuni, who awaken to the Way upon seeing a morning star. Flesh-and-blood human beings like these are Masters of bygone days whose determination to seek the Dharma was profound indeed.



We humans today should, by all means, consider following in Their footsteps. And, likewise, we of today should give rise to a similar determination by pursuing genuine training, which is in no wise connected with personal fame or gain. In recent times, in far-flung places like Japan, people who are truly searching for the Buddha's Teachings are rare. It is not that such persons do not exist, but that it is difficult to encounter them.

Occasionally, there are some who appear to leave home to become monks, letting go of the mundane, but too many of them only use the Buddha's Way as a bridge to fame and gain, sad to say. It is such a pity for them to waste their days and nights without regret, vainly training in pursuit of such dark and wayward goals. When will come the time that they abandon such things and realize the Way? Even should they meet a genuine teacher, they probably would not be fond of this 'True Dragon'. Former Buddhas would say of such people that they are persons to be pitied, since such a response is due simply to their attitude of mind, which has arisen from bad karmic roots planted in some previous life of theirs. Although they have been born as a human being, they do not have the determination to seek the Dharma for Its own sake. As a result, when they encounter true Teaching, they are suspicious of the True Dragon. When they meet genuine Dharma, they are repelled by It. Since they have never lived—neither in body and mind, nor in bones and flesh—in accordance with the Dharma, they are not suited to It, nor do they accept and apply It.

For a long time now, Masters and disciples in our Ancestral Tradition have continued to pass on the Dharma as they had received It. But nowadays, to speak of 'the mind that seeks enlightenment' resembles talking about some dream dreamt long ago. How sad not to know of, or ever see, the precious ore that lies buried in a mountain of treasure, but how much more sad when it is the mother lode of the Dharma!

Once you have given rise to the intention to seek enlightenment, even though you are spinning about through the six worlds\* of existence, being born through any of the four modes of birth, the very causes and conditions of your spinning will become your heartfelt practice of enlightenment. Accordingly, even though you have spent your past days and nights in vain pursuits, you should make the following vow while you are still in this present life:

I pray that I and all sentient beings, from this life through all future lives, will ever be able to hear the True Teachings. Once I have heard the True Dharma, I will not harbor doubts about It or fail to trust in It. Right at the time when I encounter the True Dharma, I will let go of the whole world and embrace the Buddha's Teachings. Then, together with all sentient beings on the great earth, may we fulfill the Way.

If you make your vow in this manner, it will, of itself, be a cause for your enlightenment-seeking mind to arise. Never neglect the attitude of mind behind this vow.

Further, this land of Japan is a distant place separated from others by vast seas. The hearts of its people are befuddled in the extreme. From the distant past, it has not been common for saintly persons or those naturally gifted with good sense to be born here, to say nothing of the scarcity of true students of the Way. When the fellow who knows nothing of the heart that seeks the Way is told of this Way-seeking heart, he turns a deaf ear to this good instruction. As a result, he does not reflect upon himself and harbors resentment towards others.

In short, when you put into practice your intention to seek enlightenment, you should not concern yourself with letting worldly people know that you have given rise to the enlightenment-seeking mind and are practicing the Way. Rather, you should conduct yourself so that they may not know it; even more, you should not speak of it openly. People today who seek Truth are rare; as a result, the majority do not engage themselves in spiritual practice and have not awakened in their hearts. Desirous of praise from others, they seek for someone who will tell them how integrated their practice and understanding are. This is just what 'being deluded within delusion' means. You should immediately toss out such ridiculous notions.

When training in the Way, the most difficult thing to experience is the mental attitude of the True Dharma. That attitude of mind is something that Buddhas come to Transmit to each Other. We call this the mutual Transmission of a Buddha's Light and of a Buddha's Heart and Mind.

From the time when the Tathagata was in the world up to this very day, the number of fellows who appear to be paying heed to training in the Way with the sole purpose of seeking personal fame and gain have been many. But even in such cases, if they encounter the instructions of a genuine Master, turn themselves around, and seek the True Dharma, they will naturally realize the Way. You who are now training in the Way today need to know that a spiritual illness such as this seeking after fame and gain exists. It can occur, for instance, in those with a

beginner's attitude of mind who have just begun to train, as well as in those, whether Transmitted or not, who have trained and practiced for a long time.

There will be those who dote on what has passed and try to mimic that, and there may even be demons who slander those above them and refuse to learn from them. Do not be attracted to either type or feel resentment towards either. Why do I say not to feel sorry for them or resent them? Because it is said that people who recognize the three poisons of greed, hatred, and delusion to be what they are, are rare enough, so there is no need to feel resentment towards those who do not. Even more importantly, you should not lose sight of the intention that arose when you first took delight in seeking the Way of the Buddhas. It is said that when we first give rise to this intention, we are not seeking the Dharma so that others will praise us, but are discarding thoughts of fame and gain. Without seeking fame or gain, we should simply be persons who hold to the true course of realizing the Way, never concerning ourselves with expectations of recognition or support from rulers or other officials.

Even though this is the ideal, there are some people today who, alas, are devoid of any fundamental spiritual aspirations, having no spiritual goal that they seek, and are not the least concerned over their delusive entanglements with both ordinary people and those in lofty positions. On the other hand, there are some befuddled people who once did have a heart intent on the Way, but have all too quickly forgotten about their original intention and have fallen into error, anticipating offerings from ordinary people and those in lofty positions, which offerings they joyfully consider to be merit accruing to them from the Buddha's Teachings. If they secure the confidence of some ruler or official, they fancy that they have succeeded in seeing what our Path is. This is one devil of an impediment to training in the Way. Even though you must not lose sight of the heart filled with pity for all beings, you must not delight in forming entangling relationships with them. Look! The Buddha once deigned to express it with His golden words, "Even in the present day, the Tathagata is greatly vilified and envied." Those who are foolish do not recognize what is bright and wise, which is why little brutes envy and resent great saints.

As a further example, our Ancestral Master from Western India, Bodhidharma, underwent great torments for the sake of non-Buddhists, shravakas,\* pratyekabuddhas,\* rulers, and the like. This was not because the paths of non-Buddhists were superior, nor because of some lack of deference to the Ancestral Master. After this First Ancestor came from the West, he hung up his traveling staff on Mount Sūzan at Shōrin-ji Temple when he discovered that neither Emperor Wu of Liang nor the king of Wei understood what the spirit of Buddhism is. About that

time, there were two veritable dogs, Bodhiruchi and Vinaya Master Kōtō.<sup>9</sup> Fearing that Bodhidharma might hinder the spread of their false reputations and wicked influences among honest people, they conspired against him, just as if they had looked up at the sun and tried to put it into eclipse. They were even more excessive in their behavior than Devadatta was when the Buddha was alive.<sup>10</sup> The fame and gain that they, alas, so deeply doted on was even more repellent to Bodhidharma than excrement and filth. The reason for such things is not that the strength of the Buddha's Dharma is less than ideal: just be aware that there are dogs who bark at good people. Do not worry about barking dogs and do not resent them. Give rise to the wish to offer them guidance by providing them with the following Teaching, "Although you are, undoubtedly, beasts, you should still give rise to the intention to realize enlightenment." A former sage has called these two 'beasts with human faces'.

There is also that type of 'beast' who gives his confidence and support. As the former Buddha Shakyamuni said, "Do not seek to be an intimate of kings or princes, ministers or officials, brahmans or lay Buddhists."<sup>11</sup> Truly, this is a principle of practice which those who would train in the Buddha's Way should not forget. The meritorious fruits of a bodhisattva's first beginning to train will pile up as he continues on.

Further, ever since ancient times, the skeptical Indra, Lord of Heaven, has come to test the intentions of practitioners, as has Mara the Tempter come to disturb and obstruct the practitioner's training in the Way. All instances of this have

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9. During that time, there were two Indian scholars named Bodhiruchi: one was an eminent translator of Scriptures and the other was a scholar who was envious of Bodhidharma. It is the latter Bodhiruchi who is referred to here. The Chinese Vinaya Master Kōtō was a translator and writer of Scriptural commentaries. Both tried to discredit Bodhidharma's focus on meditation practice, and it is said that both attempted to poison him.

The *Vinaya* is the section of the Buddhist canon containing the rules of monastic discipline. Dōgen is not advocating that one should not follow the Teachings of this work, but rather that one should not become rule-bound simply for the sake of rules due to a lack of spiritual understanding of their purpose and aim.

10. Devadatta was Shakyamuni Buddha's cousin and His disciple. While a senior monk, he caused a schism in the assembly, with five hundred novices following him. Although maintaining that he was still Shakyamuni's disciple, he even attempted, unsuccessfully, to kill Shakyamuni.

11. Context implies that the confidence and support in this instance derive from a desire to gain control over or manipulate a monk. As a preventative, monks are instructed not to seek out or encourage close, emotionally binding personal relationships with lay people, which would be inviting entanglements.

occurred when someone has not let go of hopes for fame and gain. When great compassion is deep within you, and your wish to spiritually aid sentient beings everywhere is well seasoned, there are no such obstructions. Then your training and practice will flower; they will be strong enough to win the citizenry over and will seem to permeate the course of events. At such periods in time, you should scrutinize yourself all the more for signs of attraction to fame and gain. Do not close your eyes to these and doze off. People who are confused by their follies rejoice in this flowering, like foolish dogs gnawing on dried-out bones. The wise and saintly treat this flowering with a repulsion such as that which the worldly have for excrement and filth.<sup>12</sup>

In general, the discriminatory disposition of the beginner's mind is incapable of measuring the Buddha's Way: though it may try to sound Its depths, it does not touch them. But this does not mean that, because one cannot fully fathom It with a beginner's mind, one is incapable of arriving at the farthest reaches of Its realm. That which penetrates to the deepest halls of this region is not the shallow cognitive functions of a beginner's mind. Simply, you should walk the Path that former saints have trod. At such a time as this, in order to visit a Master and inquire into the Way, you may have to scale mountains with a ladder and cross vast seas in a rowboat.<sup>13</sup> And, while you are seeking out a teacher to guide you or praying for a good friend to give you instruction, such a one may fall from the heavens or well up from the earth. When, with a beginner's mind, you encounter a teacher and let him guide you, he will let you hear him speak of things sentient and non-sentient, and you will hear of things pertaining to your body and to your mind. Even though hearing with one's ears is daily fare, to 'hear' sound with the eye is indeed something that seems impossible, but is not.<sup>14</sup> When you 'see Buddha', you will see Buddha in self and others: you will see great Buddhas and small Buddhas. Do not be startled or frightened by a great Buddha: do not be skeptical of, or troubled by, a small Buddha. What we call 'great Buddhas and small Buddhas' are Those whom, for the time being, we recognize as the contour of a mountain and the rippling of a valley stream. Here can be found the eloquent tongue and the eighty-four thousand songs. By offering these songs as our voicing of the Dharma, we free ourselves from the mundane. When we see through, piercing to the Truth, we root out the self. This is why the proverb says, "The higher, the harder." And, as my

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12. That is, when Buddhism prospers and flourishes either within oneself or around oneself, one should not get caught up in or attached to either.

13. Allusions to the diligent effort one may be called on to make when training in the Way.

14. As, for example, when the 'eye' is the Eye of Wise Discernment.

former teacher and Buddha put it, “Boundless as the heavens, pervasive as water.” And there is the restrained demeanor of the pine tree in spring, and there is the radiant beauty of chrysanthemums in autumn: within themselves, just as they are, lies the Truth.

When a good friend reaches this region, he will be a great teacher to gods and men. If he has not yet reached this region and tries to give instruction to people indiscriminately, he will be a great thief of gods and men. Unaware of the springtime pine, blind to the autumnal chrysanthemums, what will he have as fodder for his teaching? How will he help others to sever their karmic roots?

Further, if you are lazy or negligent in mind or body, if you are lacking in faith and trust, you should, in all devotion and sincerity, admit this openly before the Buddhas and repent your actions. When we do this, the strength from the meritorious fruits of repenting before the Buddhas will rescue and cleanse us. These meritorious fruits are the result of our being unencumbered as we live in pure trust and foster an attitude of devotion. Once we have manifested pure trust, both we ourselves and others alike turn around. The benefits of this will spread far and wide, encompassing both the sentient and the non-sentient. The meaning of this repentance can be expressed as follows:

Even though the wicked deeds that I have done in the past have piled up deep and cause obstructions to my training in the Way, I pray that all the Buddhas and Ancestors who have realized the Truth in accordance with the Buddha’s Way will have pity on me, help me let go of my karmic entanglements, and help me dissipate any impediments to training in the Way. May They help the Gateway to the inexhaustible Dharma ceaselessly pour forth Its meritorious fruits to permeate the whole universe, so that the compassionate pity of the Teachings will spread to all of us.

Keep in mind, we are as the Buddhas and Ancestors were in the ancient past: the Buddhas and Ancestors are what we will be in the future. When we look up to the Buddhas and Ancestors, we and They are but one single Buddha Ancestor. When we observe the arising of our resolve, it is but one and the same resolute Heart as Theirs. ‘Making our compassionate pity permeate every nook and cranny’ means knowing when to apply it and when to let go of it. This is why Zen Master Ryūge said, “If you have not yet realized your enlightenment in a past lifetime, by all means realize it now. In this life, ferry this body of yours, which is the product of successive past lives, to the Other Shore. Before the Buddhas of the past had awakened to the Truth, They were just like people today. Once they have completely awakened, people today will be as those Buddhas of the past.” You

should take time to study and investigate this principle, for this is what all Buddhas have guaranteed us will take place.

While being mindful in mind and decorous in body, own up to what you have done and openly admit it to Buddha. The power from owning up destroys the roots of what is defiling you. This is the whole body of true training and practice. It is the heart that truly trusts: it is the body of true faith. When you truly train and practice, the voice of valley streams and the appearance of valley streams, the appearance of mountains and the voice of mountains, along with their eighty-four thousand songs, will be unstinting. If you yourself do not prize fame or gain, body or mind, then the valley streams and mountains will, in turn, be unstinting in revealing to you That Which Is. Whether the voice of valley streams and the contour of mountains manifest for you the eighty-four thousand songs or not is, simply, what comes in the darkness of night. On the other hand, should you not yet possess the strength to proclaim valley stream and mountain as Valley Stream and Mountain, who will be able to hear you give forth the valley stream's True Voice or see you take the mountain's True Form?

*Given to the assembly of monks at Kannondōri in Kōshōhōrin-ji Temple on the fifth day of the summer training period in the second year of the En'ō era (May 12, 1240).*

*Recopied before the summer training period on the anniversary of the Buddha's birth in the first year of the Kangen era (April 28, 1243) in my room in the same temple.*

*Ejō*

*Recopied again on the eleventh day of the seventh lunar month in the first year of the Kenji era (August 2, 1275).*