

Song of the Precious Mirror Samadhi

Tung-shan Liang-chieh: Sheng Yen Tr.

It is this very Dharma
The Buddha and Patriarchs secretly transmitted.
Now that you have it
Protect it well.

Like a silver bowl full of snow
Or an egret hidden against the bright moon
They are similar but not identical.
When mingled their difference can be recognized.

The meaning does not lie in the words,
Yet those who are ripe must be taught.
As soon as you act it is a dead issue,
So consider their varying attainments.

Rejecting words or clinging to them are both
mistakes,

Like a blazing fire, useful but dangerous.
If it is only expressed in language
The precious mirror will be stained.

At midnight it is truly bright;
By daylight it no longer shows.
It serves as the law which governs all things;
Use it to uproot all suffering.
Though it is not a way of action

Still it is not without words.
As before the precious mirror,
The form and reflection gaze on each other,
You are not it,
But it is just you.

Just as an infant
is equipped with five sense organs,
It neither comes nor goes,
It neither arises nor abides.

P'o-p'o H'o-h'o—
A phrase without meaning.
You can never get the substance of it
Because the language is not correct.

Doubling the Li trigram makes six lines.
The outer and inner lines mutually interact.

Stacked, they become three pairs;
At most they can transform into five.

Like the five aromas of the hyssop plant
Or the five branches of the vajra scepter.
The exact center subtly harmonizing,
Drumming and singing simultaneously.

Penetrate the goal and you will fathom the way.
In order to lead there must be a road.

To be wrong is auspicious;
Do not oppose it.

Natural and subtle

It is neither ignorance nor enlightenment
Causes and conditions have their time and season,
Tranquil and illuminating.

It is so small it enters the spaceless,
So large it is beyond dimension.

If you are off by a hair's breadth
Then you would be out of harmony.

Now there is sudden and gradual (enlightenment)
In order to establish the fundamental guidelines.
When the fundamental guidelines are clear
They become the rule.

Realization of the basic principle is the ultimate
standard,

Genuine, constant, yet flowing,
With still body but racing mind.,

Like a tethered horse or a mouse frozen by fright.

Past sages pitied them
And liberated them with Buddhadharma.

Following their upside-down ways
They took black for white.

When inverted thinking disappears,
They realize mind of their own accord.

If you want to merge with the ancient track
Then contemplate the ancients.

At the completion of the Buddha path
Ten kalpas of contemplation will be established.

Like a tiger's lame foot,
Like a shoeless horse,
Because there is a defect
You seek the jeweled bench and priceless halter.
Because you are astonished
You realize you were like the brown or white ox.

Hou-i used his skill
to hit the target at a hundred paces.
As soon as the arrow hits the mark
Of what further use is his skill?

When a wooden man breaks into song,
A stone woman gets up to dance.
Since this cannot be understood by reasoning
How can it be analyzed?

The minister serves his lord;
The son obeys his father.
If he does not obey, he is not filial;
If the minister does not serve, he is not loyal.

To cultivate in hiding, functioning in secret,
Like a fool, like a dolt;
If only you are able to persist,
You will be called a master among masters.