

Song of Zazen

All beings by nature are Buddha, as ice by nature is water.
Apart from water, there is no ice; apart from beings, no Buddha.
How sad that people ignore the near and search for truth afar.
It's like someone in the midst of water crying out in thirst,
like a child of a wealthy home wandering among the poor.
Lost on dark paths of ignorance,
we wander through the six worlds, from dark path to dark path.
When shall we be freed from birth and death?
Zazen is the gateway to freedom; it merits the highest praise.
Devotion, responsibility, training—the many good qualities—
all have their source in zazen.
Those who try zazen even once, wipe away beginningless mistakes.
Where are all the dark paths then? Then the Pure Land itself is near.
Those who hear this truth even once, and listen with a grateful heart—
treasuring it, revering it—
gain blessings without end.
Much wiser are those who turn about and bear witness to self-nature—
self nature that is no nature.
They go far beyond mere doctrine.
Here cause and effect are the same, and the Way is neither two nor three.
With form that is no-form, going or coming we are never astray.
With thought that is no-thought,
your singing and dancing are the voice of the dharma.
Boundless and free is the sky of samadhi! Bright is the full moon of wisdom.
Truly, is anything missing now?
Nirvana is right before your eyes.
This very place is the Lotus Land of purity.
This very body is the body of Buddha.

- Hakuin Zenji

Translation by Robert Aitken Roshi