

Hakuin's Song of Meditation

All beings are from the very beginning Buddhas.
It is like water and ice:
Apart from water, no ice,
Outside living beings, no Buddhas.
Not knowing it is near, they seek it afar.
What a pity!
It is like one in the water who cries out for thirst;
It is like the child from a rich house
Who has strayed away among the poor.
The cause of our circling through the six worlds
Is that we are on the dark paths of ignorance.
Dark path upon dark path treading.
When shall we escape from birth-and-death?
The Zen meditation of the Mahayana
Is beyond all praise.
Giving and morality and the other perfections,
Taking of the name, repentance, discipline, And
the many other right actions,
All come back to the practice of meditation.
By the merit of a single sitting
They destroy innumerable accumulated sins.
How should there be wrong paths for them? The
Pure Land paradise is not far.
When in reverence this truth is heard even once,
They who praise it and gladly embrace it
Have merit without end.
How much more those who turns within
And confirms directly their own nature,
That their own nature is no-nature -
Such has transcended vain words.
The gate opens, and cause and effect are one;
Straight runs the way - not two, not three.
Taking as form the form of no-form,
Going or returning, we are ever at home. Taking
as thought the thought of no-thought, Singing
and dancing, all is the voice of truth. Wide is the
heaven of boundless Samadhi, Radiant the full
moon of the fourfold wisdom. What remains to
be sought?
Nirvana is clear before us,
This very place the Lotus Paradise,
This very body the Buddha.

This version is thought to be based on Trevor
Leggett's translation in his First Zen Reader.
Find out more here: <https://tlayt.org>