

Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo

Also known as *Life-Extending Ten-Line Kannon Sutra*
(*Enmyō jikkū kannon gyō* 延命十句觀音經).

Kanzeon,
paying homage to Buddha,
forged a causal connection with Buddha,
a karmic affinity with Buddha,
a karmic affinity with Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
thus attaining permanence, ease, selfhood, and purity.
In the morning think of Kanzeon,
in the evening think of Kanzeon.
Thought after thought arises from mind;
thought after thought is not separate from mind.

kan ze on 觀世音
na mu butsu 南無佛
yo butsu u in 與佛有因
yo butsu u en 與佛有緣
butsu ho so en 佛法僧緣
jō raku ga jō 常樂我淨
cho nen kan ze on 朝念觀世音
bo nen kan ze on 暮念觀世音
nen nen ju shin ki 念念從心起
nen nen fu ri shin 念念不離心

The first six lines of this verse establish the bodhisattva *Kannon* (Kanzeon) as a being worthy of "mindful remembrance" (*nen* 念, S. *smti*) and prayers for help, typically by calling his name in "mindful recitation" (*nen* 念): "Homage to Kanzeon Bodhisattva" (*namu Kanzeon Bosa* 南無觀世音菩薩). Lines three and four play on the term *innen* 因緣, which in Buddhist philosophy refers to "immediate causes (*in* 因) and enabling conditions (*en* 緣)," but in common Japanese parlance means something like "karmic affinity." "Permanence, ease, selfhood, and purity" (*jō raku ga jō* 常樂我淨) are the four attributes of nirvana, which is free from the impermanence (*mujō* 無常), suffering (*ku* 苦), lack of self (*muga* 無我), and impurity (*fujō* 不淨) that characterizes all things (*hō* 法, S. dharmas) in the round of birth and death (*shoji* 生死, S. *sasāra*). The final two lines turn away from Kanzeon as an object of devotion and focus attention on the mind (one's own mind) in which thoughts of that bodhisattva arise: that mind, in its essence, is nothing other than the buddha-mind (*busshin* 佛心) itself. This combination of devotional and introspective practice was typical of the Buddhism of Ming dynasty (1644-1912) China, which had a big influence on Japanese Zen.

Lecture by Sojun Roshi

This lecture is reprinted from the January 2003 *Berkeley Zen Center Newsletter*.

Commentary on the *Enmei Jukko Kannon Gyo*

Enmei in the title means something like “eternal,” but eternal is not such an accurate word in Buddhism. Something like endless dimensions without beginning or end may be more accurate. Or we could say, unlimited life, eternal life, boundless life. *Jukku* (or *jikku*) means “ten phrases.” *Kannon* is Japanese for Avalokiteshvara or Kwan-yin, which is Chinese. *Gyo* is “sutra.” So, the title is “Endless dimension, ten phrases, Avalokiteshvara sutra.” Endless dimension also has the meaning of endless dimensions in the moment. If there is no beginning or no end, then this moment has, as Dogen says, its own past and future, its own endless dimension. We tend to think of this moment as one speck of time, one fleeting moment of time, but we also have to understand this moment as covering or including all time and all space. Extending life is the same as when we talk about no-birth, no-death – birth, death and no-birth, no-death in endless dimensions.

Here are explanations of the ten phrases:

1) *Kanzeon*: To evoke *Kanzeon* is to call forth the spirit of compassion. Each one of the ten phrases expresses our compassionate practice from a particular standpoint. *Kanzeon*, one might say, is our compassionate heart. It’s our unlimited, universal, compassionate heart. *Kan* has the feeling of penetrating, illuminating, piercing through or totally understanding. *Ze* means “world” and *on* is “sound.” So, *Kanzeon* is the one who hears the sounds of the world or the cries of the world and doesn’t ignore the suffering of the world. Sound here also can stand for sight or touch or taste or any sense. Avalokiteshvara is probably the most popular Bodhisattva and is given many human qualities. I think *Kanzeon* personifies what I like to think of as our humaneness, as distinct from our wisdom, which is Manjushri. Manjushri sees with a clear, cold eye, and Avalokiteshvara sees with a vast, warm heart. The balance or synthesis of the two is Buddha. So on one side of the altar we have Manjushri who personifies wisdom beyond wisdom, seeing everything just as it is without any distortion, and on the other side, we have Avalokiteshvara who personifies compassion. In between we have Buddha. Each one is a Bodhisattva who represents a different aspect of our nature. Since these are not idols but personifications, having these figures on our altar is a way we respect aspects of our own nature. Similarly, when we bow, we don’t worship something in particular, but we greatly respect these aspects of our nature. When we offer incense and chant the sutra, we invite the spirit of *Kanzeon* to join our practice. We evoke something from within ourselves. So the sutra is dedicated to *Kanzeon*.

2) *Namu Butsu*: *Namu* is sometimes translated as “Homage.” *Butsu* is Buddha. So, the phrase is “Homage to Buddha.” When we say, “pay homage,” it may seem like a vassal paying homage to a lord, and to see ourselves and Buddha in that way may be okay, but to translate *Namu* as “at one with” is another way of expressing that feeling. Not “Buddha is over there and I’m over here,” but “one with Buddha.” We use the word “atone” sometimes, and we think of atonement as penitence. The word has taken on that meaning. But atonement means to be at one, to return to oneness, or return to completion. It is what we do to be at one with “wholeness” or “holiness.” Whatever is necessary to be at one with Buddha is what we have to do. We can call it “at-one-ment” or atonement. Actually, *zazen* is atonement. You don’t have to make a fuss, just sit. So *Namu Butsu* really means at one with Buddha.

3) *Yo Butsu u in*: *Yo* means “with,” and *Butsu* is Buddha, and *in* means “direct cause,” or “fundamental cause,” or “seed cause.” In this phrase, we have *in* and in the next phrase, *en*. *In* means “direct” and *en* means “indirect” or “supporting.” This third phrase has the meaning of, “this very nature is Buddha, directly Buddha.” There are three ways of talking about Buddha nature. One is called *Ryo in Bussho*. *Ryo* means to realize; it means the capacity to realize our Buddha nature. *Bussho* means fundamentally, Buddha nature, Dharmakaya or, we are that. *En* means through participating, or cooperating cause we can realize it. The seed is a direct cause for a plant. This is *in*. Sun, water, air, heat and so forth are cooperating causes, or *en*. Direct cause, or *in*, is the absolute fundamental factor of what we are, and *en*, or indirect cause, is what we have to manifest to realize it. *In* is kind of like your original face.

4) *Yo Butsu u en*: As I said, *en* means “indirect cause.” So the third and fourth phrase go together. We have a direct cause for Buddhahood and also an indirect cause. The contributory cause is like a catalyst. Practice is like the water and the sun that causes the seed to sprout. *En* is rubbing the flint to create a spark or we can also call it the condition. *In en* is another term. *Inen* as the combination of *in* and *en* means “karma.” When we have a volitional action which causes something to move, that’s called karmic activity. That karmic activity is activity within emptiness or *ku*. *Inen* is constantly creating forms in emptiness. So, how we direct our effort is important. The basis of Buddhist morality is that you reap the fruit of your own action. If you do something unwholesome, then unwholesomeness follows. And if you do something wholesome, wholesomeness follows. We’re responsible for whatever we do and we share responsibility for the world. Some people think of Buddhism as fatalism because we don’t talk about God or God’s judgment. But instead of judgment, we understand the results of our actions as a kind of retribution according to the laws of karma.

5) *Bu po so en*: This phrase uses the same *en* as before, meaning indirect or cooperating cause. *Bu* is “Buddha.” *Po* is “Dharma.” *So* is “Sangha.” Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, the Three Treasures are also a cooperating cause for understanding our Buddha nature, or for being one with our Buddha nature. The Three Treasures evoke our Buddha nature and cause us to remember our original face.

6) *Jo raku ga jo*: *Jo* here is another word for “permanent,” or “eternal,” or “endless dimension.” *Raku* is “happiness” or “joy.” *Ga* is “self” and *jo* is “purity.” This has the feeling of,

“in purity we have eternal joy of ourselves, or endless dimensions of enjoying our self-nature.” I would say, “self-joyous samadhi.” When we are one with our original nature, when we let drop body and mind and become one with truth, no matter what happens to us, we have joy and purity. So the sixth phrase has the sense of pure joy, self-joyous samadhi, which extends to everyone, and is not separate from anyone.

7) Cho nen Kanzeon: *Cho* is “morning.” *Nen* is an important word. It means “mind,” or individual consciousness, or our conscious thought. This phrase has the meaning of, “in the morning put your thought on *Kanzeon*.” That is, put your undistracted thought on *Kanzeon*, or evoke *Kanzeon*. Bring *Kanzeon* to life. Don’t neglect *Kanzeon*. *Nen* is like the conscious thought of this moment. There are different kinds or degrees of *nen*. There is the *nen* of this moment and there is the *nen*, which takes a step back and contemplates. The first *nen* is one with activity, without reflection, just direct perception. The second *nen* is when we reflect on something and try to identify it by thought or think about it. And the third *nen* is taking another step back and developing what the second *nen* has thought about the first *nen*. All these *nen* thoughts are important, but when we sit zazen, we are concentrated in the first *nen*, just direct perception moment by moment. So in the morning, just let your *nen* thought become completely with *Kanzeon*.

8) Bo nen Kanzeon: *Bo* means “evening.” In the evening, let your *nen* thought be on *Kanzeon*. Together, these last two phrases mean, “moment by moment, be one with *Kanzeon*.”

9) Nen nen ju shin ki: Thought after thought, conscious thought after conscious thought. *Ju* means “follow.” Thought following thought. *Shin* is “mind” and *ki* is “arrived.” Each thought which follows upon the last is no other than *shin*, which is big mind, all-inclusive mind. We can say Buddha nature, or universal mind. In this sense, *shin* is used to complement thought. So sometimes we call Buddha nature mind only. There are many ways of expressing it. Here our individual small mind is not separate from Big Mind and is actually an expression of Big Mind.

10) Nen nen fu ri shin: This complements the previous phrase. Again, it’s *nen nen*. *Fu* means “not,” and *ri* is “separate,” and *shin* is “mind” again. This is just saying it in a different way. These two phrases go together. Thought after thought arises from Big Mind; thought after thought is not separate from this Mind, meaning *Kanzeon* is not separate from you or I or Big Mind -- the mind of the universe.

Student: Where does the sutra come from?

Sojun: Sutras are supposed to come from India.

Student: What does the word “sutra” mean?

Sojun: Sutra means the word of Buddha. It comes from the Sanskrit root “suture,” which means to sew or string together. Buddha’s words strung together is the meaning. In Buddhism, a sutra is Buddha’s very own words, but that has a very broad meaning because Shakyamuni Buddha’s words were not written down until four hundred years after his parinirvana. It was a kind of oral tradition. In Buddhism what people recognize as being authentic is not necessarily something from Shakyamuni’s mouth. We talk about Dharmakaya Buddha, Sambhogakaya Buddha, Nirmanakaya Buddha. Nirmanakaya Buddha is a person like Shakyamuni Buddha, a person who is a personification of Buddha. Sambhogakaya is more the spirit of Buddha. That’s not a complete explanation. But sutras can be an expression of Sambhogakaya, the spirit of Buddha. It’s Buddha, but it’s not the Nirmanakaya, the person. And Dharmakaya covers everything both manifest and un-manifest. So people come to accept some sutras as authentic, not from Buddha’s mouth, but authentic in that they arise from the spirit of truth.

Kannon manifests in many forms to help people. Sometimes as a prostitute, sometimes as a bartender or a taxi driver, a minister or statesman. If you try to pin Avalokiteshvara down to one form, you can’t do it. Avalokiteshvara is always being called forth from emptiness. So you can say that *Kannon* or compassionate nature has no beginning or end. That’s endless dimension.

Student: Is it ever appropriate to withhold compassion?

Sojun: I hesitate to say never about anything. What is necessary is to do the appropriate thing, and we don’t always know what that is beforehand. If you have some rule and try to stick to it, you’re creating inflexibility. So I would say that sometimes it’s appropriate to withhold it. I don’t know when. Don’t ask me when. It’s like, “should you never tell a lie?” Sometimes you have to tell an untruth. Don’t ask me when. But you’ll know when.

February 20, 1982

One may wonder what good it does to chant for others’ well-being. The founder of our temple [Austin Zen Center], Zenkei Blanche Hartman, offered the following words:

“Putting our heart into our intention, our compassionate intention, and putting it out in the world has an effect on the world. It isn’t that we get what we want. We create compassion in the world when we call on our own compassion in this way. So for me, chanting for friends who are ill or for the safety of our monastery mobilizes my compassion and puts it out there. I think we can all do that. And it’s very satisfying to me. What can I do when I can’t do anything? This is something I can do. I can’t go down to Tassajara and fight the fire. I can’t go operate on my friends who are ill and remove the cancer. But I can put my heart in my deep concern for their well-being and this is not doing nothing. This is doing something.

Following a ... chant of the *Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo*, Blanche asked: “What is this? What are we doing when we do a chant like this? What are we calling on when we call on the great compassionate mind of Avalokiteshvara? I think this is an expression of our faith and devotion

and it's a calling forth of the great compassionate mind of each one of us and turning our intention and attention toward whoever we're dedicating it to. It's calling up our compassionate mind. Avalokiteshvara is just the combination of all of the compassionate minds of all of us together [and that's what] make[s] Avalokiteshvara appear in the world.

When we really focus our intention and attention in all sincerity, it has an effect on the world."

— Zenkei Blanche Hartman on July 2, 2008 at the San Francisco Zen Center

Dharma Talk on *Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo*

Gene Bush, March 29, 2020

Now that the Board has decided to assure that all cautious steps are being taken to minimize the spread of the virus, we have to ask, Now what? I began to search for alternative 20-second recitations in order to support my new habit of washing hands frequently. Seeing that I also need to cultivate new habits of mind, I began to turn towards Kanzeon.

Frequently for well-being we chant the 10-line verse, calling upon Avalokiteshvara (aka Kanzeon, Kannon) the archetypal figure who evokes boundless compassion. She is often depicted with 10,000 arms and hands, each hand with an eye in it, an indication of her capacity to perceive widely and deeply and thus find an appropriate response. Literally, Kanzeon can translate as "deeply perceiving world sound"; and because of her archetypal nature we know that she represents our own compassionate hearts. So we arrive at the more poetic, "Hearer of the cries of the world."

Zazen itself is the great teacher, leading us to stability, clarity, generosity, loving kindness, patience and gratitude. Physically, emotionally, socially together we are all engaged in responding appropriately to new information and new conditions. We are noticing the absence of things normally done out of habit*, and the presence of a new practice – only the activity of responding to circumstances as they arise. There is great medicine in this time of disruption. We need to be able to deeply perceive the world right now. We cultivate the capacity to see and hear this way – being grounded in attentive presence – through our practice of zazen. We begin to recognize our own true Buddha Nature, and the truth of there being nothing outside of this.

One of the resources we have in Practice is to turn toward the chants and recitations we use in the temple setting. Here [is] my rough translation with interpretation:

Great open compassionate Self
With gratitude for our collective true nature
True nature is my already-present home
True nature is nourished by my activity
The triple treasure is my foundation.

Finding great joy in ease and pure motivation,
In the morning my first impulse of mind and heart is compassion
In the evening my last impulse of mind and heart is compassion
Present moment awareness arises within big mind
Present moment awareness is expressed within big mind

Please take up the practice of chanting this wonderful teaching – one time if you are washing your hands. Or chant it 7 times, in ever-widening spheres of intention. This is not a magical wish; this is a very ordinary way to return to our deepest vow, relying upon gratitude and compassion to inform the choices we make throughout each day. Please also study the ways in which this chant reflects and emphasizes the teachings of the *Metta Sutta*, our focus of study in class.

* many thanks to Ed Brewster for this phrase

Healing in Zen - ENMEI JUKKU KANNON GYO [Elihu Genmyo Smith]

I was asked, "are there healing practices in Zen?"

There is much to say about this; one place to begin a discussion ... is citing Zen Master Hakuin's comments on the *Ten Clause Kannon Sutra (Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo)* and what he calls healing practices in the midst of cause and effect.

Hakuin has a whole book devoted to this verse, though the book is only available in Japanese (*Enmei Jukku Kannon-gyo Reigen-ki*).

However, Hakuin also speaks at length in many places in his writings about healing that can occur with the chanting of this verse. There are excellent translations in English by Norman Waddell of selections from Hakuin on this subject. On the web, the following Waddell translation about the *Enmei Jukku* (which I reprint below) is a good start:

<https://tricycle.org/special-section/the-kannon-sutra>

"Toward the end of his life, Zen master Hakuin [1689 -1769] took an interest in aspects of life outside the monastery walls, including social and governmental concerns. In the passage that follows, excerpted from a letter addressed in 1754 to Lord Nabeshima on the subject of the virtuous leader, he discusses the merit of reciting *Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyo*.

When we met the other day I had meant to encourage you to take up the *Enmei Jukku Kannon*, but our meeting was so brief that I did not have the opportunity. I therefore send it for your inspection along with this letter.

This work has been associated with wondrous miracles that have taken place in both China and Japan. Because it is so brief, I sincerely hope that you, not to speak of your close retainers and the common people as well, will recite it two or three hundred times each day. The reason lies in the testing. Give this

work to those who are seriously ill or who have met with some unexpected disaster, and have them examine it for their consolation. If it is recited with sincerity, awe-inspiring miracles will without fail be accomplished. Its first advantage is that the person who recites it will be completely free from disease and will attain to long life. This applies to anyone at all. . . ."

For more details on *Enmei Jukku*, see Waddell's translations *Beating the Cloth Drum* (Shambhala), *Wild Ivy* (Shambhala) and Hakuin's *Precious Mirror Cave* (Counterpoint) and elsewhere.

Hakuin tells of a man in ancient China called Kao-huang, who was sentenced to be executed. He was a man of firm religious faith and around midnight of the day before his execution he was meditating upon Kannon, when the form of the Bodhisattva appeared before him. He was told that if he could recite the Kannon Sutra a thousand times in the night, his life would be saved. Pleading that this was impossible, he was told to begin nonetheless.

The next morning, when he was about to be killed, the sword snapped and so did all others that were tried. The amazed executioner enquired as to the reason and was told the story, whereupon Kao-huang was pardoned. Ever since this Sutra has been held in high esteem and many have been saved or healed through reciting it.

There is a translation by Philip Yampolsky [this should sound somewhat familiar]:

Kanzeon! Salutation and devotion to the Buddha!
We are one with the Buddha
In cause and effect related to all Buddhas
and to Buddha Dharma and Sangha.
Our true nature is
Eternal, Joyous, Selfless and Pure.
So let us chant every mornong Kanzeon with Nen (attention)
Every evening Kanzeon with Nen!
Nen Nen arises from Mind
Nen Nen is not separate from Mind.

English translation by Maezumi Roshi

Kanzeon!
At one with the Buddha,
Related to all Buddhas in cause and effect,
And to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha,
Joyful pure eternal being.
Morning mind is Kanzeon,
Evening mind is Kanzeon.
This very moment arises from mind,
This very moment is not separate from mind.

Prolonging Life Ten Phrase Kanzeon Sutra

(translation by Bernie Glassman)

Kanzeon!
At one with Buddha
Directly Buddha
Also indirectly Buddha
And indirectly Buddha, Dharma, Sangha
Joyful, pure eternal being!
Morning mind is Kanzeon
Evening mind is Kanzeon
Nen, nen arises from mind
Nen, nen is not separate from mind.

San Francisco Zen Center

Bodhisattva of Compassion!
Veneration to the Buddha!
With Buddha I have origin;
With Buddha I have affinity;
Affinity with Buddha, Dharma, Sangha;
Constancy, joy, self and purity.
Mornings, my thought is the Bodhisattva of Compassion;
Evenings, my thought is the Bodhisattva of Compassion.
Thought after thought arises in mind.
Thought after thought is not separate from mind.

Dedication:

May we awaken Buddha's compassion and luminous mirror
wisdom. With full awareness we have chanted the Enmei Jukku
Kannon Gyo for protecting life, we dedicate the merit to
The well-being, comfort and complete healing of our dear friends -----
May they be deeply supported in the dharma, peaceful and free from
suffering, and may we together with all beings realize Buddha's way.

John Blofield in his book 'Compassion Yogo' also refers to this, though he speaks of hearing it in China and does not mention the Japanese connections. He translates it as:

Kuan Shih Yin!
Hail Buddha!
In him a cause!
In him, an outcome!
Buddha-Dharma-Sangha outcome
Lasting Joy, ego clensed!
Morning, think Kuan Yin!
Evening, think Kuan Yin!
Each call from mind!
No call not mind-born!

Blofield Adds, 'Clearly one could draw some kind of connected meaning from these ejaculations, but it would be ludicrously inept and convey no idea of the effect at which the words are aimed.' So maybe it is better not to translate!

Seattle Soto Zen

Kanzeon!

I venerate the Buddha

Buddha is my source

Buddha is my affinity

Affinity with Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

Constancy, ease, assurance, purity

Morning my thought is Kanzeon

Evening my thought is Kanzeon

Thought after thought arises in the mind

Thought after thought is not separate from mind

http://www.bamboointhewind.org/chant_kanzeon.html

Kanzeon! At one with Buddha.

Related to all Buddhas in cause and effect.

And to Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

Joyful, pure, eternal being!

Morning mind is Kanzeon.

Evening mind is Kanzeon.

This very moment arises from Mind.

This very moment is not separate from Mind.

Ten Line Sutra of Avalokitesvara's Boundless Life

Avalokitesvara, perceiver of the cries of the world,

takes refuge in Buddha,

will be a Buddha,

helps all to be Buddhas,

is not separate from Buddha, Dharma, Sangha --

being eternal, intimate, pure, and joyful.

In the morning, be one with Avalokitesvara,

In the evening, be one with Avalokitesvara,

whose heart, moment by moment, arises,

whose heart, moment by moment, remains!

Chant of Boundless Compassion [This is chanted at Great Vow Zen Monastery]

Absorbing world sounds awakens a Buddha right here.

This Buddha, the source of compassion,

This Buddha receives only compassion,
Buddha, Dharma, Sangha -- just compassion!
Thus, the pure heart always rejoices.
In the light, recall this.
In the dark, recall this.
Moment after moment the true heart arises,
Time after time there is nothing but this!

Kanzeon Sutra

Kanzeon!
One with the Buddha
Directly Buddha
Indirectly Buddha
One with Buddha, dharma, sangha
Joyful, pure, eternal, being!
Morning mind, Kanzeon!
Evening mind, Kanzeon!
Mind of this very moment, Kanzeon!
Never let it go!

Adoration to Kwanzeon! Adoration to the Buddha!
To the Buddha we are related
In terms of cause and effect.
Depending on the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha,
(Nirvana is possible, which is) eternal, ever-blessed, autonomous, and free from defilements.
Every morning our thoughts are on Kwanzeon,
Every evening our thoughts are on Kwanzeon.
Every thought issues from the Mind,
Every thought is not separated from the Mind.