

Trust In Mind

the *Hsin Shin Ming*

of Tseng Ts'an, Third Patriarch of Zen

Translated by
Stanley Lombardo



信心銘



The Great Way is not difficult:
Just don't pick and choose.
Cut off all likes or dislikes
And it is clear like space.

The slightest distinction
Splits heaven from earth.
To see the truth
Don't be for or against.

Likes and dislikes
Are the mind's disease.
If you miss the deep meaning,
It is useless to still your thoughts.

It is clear as vast space,
Nothing missing, nothing extra.
If you choose or reject,
You cannot see things as they are.

Outside, don't get tangled in things.
Inside, don't get lost in emptiness.
Be still and become One,
And confusion stops by itself.





Stop moving to become still
And the stillness will move.
If you hold on to opposites,
You cannot understand One.

If you don't understand One,
This and that cannot function.
Denied, the world goes on.
Pursued, emptiness is lost.

The more you think and talk,
The more you lose the Way.
Cut off all thinking
And pass freely anywhere.

Return to the root and understand,
Chase outcomes and lose the source.
One clear moment within
Illumines the emptiness before you.

Emptiness changing into things
Is only our deluded view.
Do not seek the truth,
Only put down your opinions.





Do not live in the world of opposites.
Be careful! Never go that way.
If you make right and wrong,
Your mind is lost in confusion.

Two comes from One,
But do not cling even to this One.
If one mind does not arise,
The ten thousand things are without fault.

No fault, no ten thousand things,
No arising, no mind.
No world, no one to see it,
No one to see it, no world.

This comes when that goes.
That arises when this sinks.
Understand both
As originally one emptiness.

In emptiness the two are the same,
And each holds the ten thousand things.
If you do not see great or small,
How can you prefer one to the other?





The Way is calm and wide,
Not easy, not difficult.
But small minds get lost.
Hurrying, they fall behind.

Clinging, they go too far,
Sure to take a wrong turn.
Just let it be! In the end,
Nothing goes, nothing stays.

Follow nature and find the Way,
Free, easy, and undisturbed.
Tied to your thoughts, you lose the truth,
Become heavy, dull, and unwell.

Not well, the mind is troubled,
So why hold or reject anything?
To ride the One Vehicle,
Do not despise the six senses.

Not despising the six senses
Is already enlightenment.
The wise do not act,
Fools bind themselves.





In true Dharma there is no this or that,
So why blindly chase desires?
Using mind to grasp mind
Is the original mistake.

Peaceful and troubled are only ideas.
Enlightenment has no likes or dislikes.
All opposites arise
From faulty views.

Illusions, flowers in the air—
Why try to grasp them?
Win, lose, right, wrong—
Put it all down!

If the eye never sleeps
Dreams disappear by themselves.
If the mind makes no distinctions
The ten thousand things are one essence.

See the deep and dark essence
And be free from entanglements.
See the ten thousand things as equal
And return to true nature.





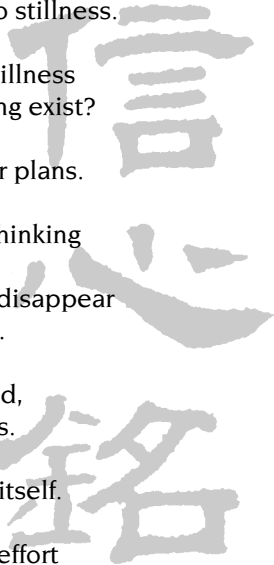
Without any distinctions
There can be no comparisons.
Stop and there is no motion.
Move and there is no stillness.

Without motion or stillness
How can a single thing exist?
In true nature
There are no goals or plans.

In the mind before thinking
No effort is made.
Doubts and worries disappear
And faith is restored.

Nothing is left behind,
Nothing stays with us.
Bright and empty,
The mind shines by itself.

In the mind without effort
Thinking cannot take root.
In the true Dharma world
There is no self or other.





To abide in this world
Just say "Not two."
"Not two" includes everything,
Excludes nothing.

Enlightened beings everywhere
All return to the Source.
Beyond time and space,
One moment is ten thousand years.

Nothing here, nothing there,
But the universe is always before you.

Infinitely small is infinitely large:
No boundaries, no differences.
Infinitely large is infinitely small:
Measurements do not matter here.

What is, is what is not.
What is not, is what is.
Where it is not like this,
Do not bother staying.







One is all,
All is one.
When you see things like this,
You are already complete.

Trust and Mind are not two.
Not-two is Trust in Mind.

The Way is beyond all words:
Not past, not future, not present.







Translator's Postscript

Seng Ts'an was the third Chinese patriarch of Zen, having received transmission from Bodhidharma's successor, Hui K'o. He was suffering from leprosy when he met Hui K'o. The Transmission of the Lamp records their moment of truth, which echoes Hui K'o's famous encounter with Bodhidharma:

Seng Ts'an went to Hui K'o and said, "My body is gripped by a fatal disease. Please, master, wipe away my sins." Hui K'o said: "Bring your sins out here and I will wipe them away for you." Seng Ts'an sat for a while and then said, "When I look for my sins I cannot find them." Hui K'o answered, "I have wiped away your sins."

After Seng Ts'an received transmission, Buddhism was persecuted in China, and he spent fifteen years wandering and hiding in the mountains. Out of all this hard training comes the poem—the first on record attributed to a Ch'an master.





The title Hsin Shin Ming has the literal meaning “Trust Mind Inscription.” The character for *hsin* is composed of two parts, showing a man standing by his words. *Shin* is the character for heart-mind. Blending Taoist and Buddhist teachings one oneness, equality, suchness, and interpenetration, the *Hsin Shin Ming* introduces us to a vast and meticulous world that is completely open to the human mind.

The poem consists of 146 lines and differs from standard Chinese verse in that the lines are unrhymed and contain only four characters each instead of the usual five or seven, creating a terse, no-nonsense movement that I have tried to capture in the translation.

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Stanley Lombardo is a classics scholar and translator at the University of Kansas. He received transmission from Zen Master Seung Sahn.





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