

Clouds in Water Zen Center Short Verses and Gathas

Verse for Beginning the Day

Waking up this morning, I smile.
Twenty-four brand new hours
are before me.
I vow to live fully in each moment,
Looking at all beings
with eyes of compassion.

Brushing the teeth:

Brushing the teeth this morning/evening
I vow with all beings
To acquire the eyeteeth of wisdom
Cutting off delusion.

Using the toilet:

Using the toilet,
I vow with all beings
To eliminate defilement
Removing greed, hate and delusion.

Washing the Hands:

Washing the hands, may all living beings
Acquire extremely subtle hands
With which to hold buddha-dharma.

Verse of the Robe

*Dai sai gedap-puku
muso fuku den e
hi bu nyorai kyo
ko do shoshu jo*

How great, the robe of liberation,
a formless field of merit.
Wrapping ourselves in Buddha's teaching,
we free all living beings.

Verse of Repentance

All my ancient, twisted karma
From beginningless greed, hate and delusion,
born of my body, speech and mind,
I now fully avow.

Great Vows for All

Beings are numberless,
I vow to free them.
Delusions are inexhaustible,
I vow to end them.
Dharma gates are boundless,
I vow to enter them.
The Buddha Way is unsurpassable,
I vow to realize it.

Mealtime Gatha

Earth, water, air and fire
combined to make this food.
Numberless beings have died
and labored that we may eat.
May we be nourished,
that we may nourish life.

Work Practice Verse

Let us strive to purify our minds.
Let us strive to actualize our practice.
Let us strive to benefit the earth.
Let us strive to liberate all beings.
To all Buddhas past, present and future,
To all beings in the six realms,
To all those dedicated to the truth,
We offer the merits of our labors.

Verse for Opening the Sutras

The unsurpassed, profound
and wondrous dharma
is rarely met with, even in a hundred,
thousand million kalpas.
Now we can see and hear it,
accept and maintain it.
May we unfold the meaning of the
Tathagata's truth.

Dedicating the Merit

May the merit of this penetrate
Into each and every thing and all places,
So that we and the world together
May realize the Buddha Way.

Verse for Ending the Day

Going to sleep tonight,
I vow with all beings
To calm all things,
Allowing the mind to be clear and pure.