

Mountains and Rivers Sutra

1

The mountains and rivers of the present moment are the actualization of the teachings of ancient Buddhas. By dwelling together in their dharma state they are brining about the merit of thorough investigation. Because they are the condition from before the Kalpa of Emptiness, they are the activity of the present moment; because they are the self before any indications [of difference] arise, they are actualized liberation. Due to the fact that the various merits of the mountains are so high and so broad, the power to ride the clouds necessarily spreads [upward] from the mountains, and the wondrous practice of following the wind necessarily liberates [outward] from the mountains.

2

Priest Kai of Mount Sanyo said to the assembly, “The blue mountain walks constantly; the stone woman gives birth in the night.”

The mountains do not lack [any of] the merit that they ought to possess. For this reason, they are constantly dwelling peacefully; they are constantly walking. You should directly study the merit of that walking in minute detail. Because the walking of a mountain must be like the walking of a person, do not doubt that the mountain walks, thinking that [it is impossible] because it does not look the same as people striding.

3

This statement of the Buddha ancestor already points to walking. This is his attainment of the fundamental. You should investigate this “constantly walking” address to the assembly.

Because it is walking, it is constant. Although it is clear that the blue mountain’s walking is “faster than the wind,” people in the mountains are not aware of it and do not know it – being “in the mountains” means the opening of a flower within the world. People outside the mountains are not aware and do not know – it is this principle: people without eyes to see the mountains are not aware and do not know, do not see and do not hear. Those who doubt that mountains walk also do not yet know the walking of the self. It is not that the self is without walking. The walking of the self is not yet known. They have not clarified it. And in the same way that they want to know the self walking, they must also directly know the blue mountain walking.

4

The blue mountain definitely is not sentient, and is not insentient. The self definitely is not sentient, and is not insentient. It is impossible to doubt the walking of this blue mountain. We do not know how many dharma worlds would be sufficient to clarify the blue mountain. You should consider clearly the walking of the blue mountain, and the walking of the self. Backwards stepping and stepping backwards should be considered together.

5

You should consider that since that very time before there were any indications [of differences], around [the time of] the King of Emptiness, walking forward and backward has not stopped for a moment. If walking had paused, Buddhas and ancestors would not have appeared. If walking had reached its limit, the Buddha Dharma would not have reached this day. Forward stepping has not yet stopped; backward stepping has not yet stopped. When the stepping is forward, it does not oppose backward stepping; when the stepping is backward, it does not oppose forward stepping. We take this merit as the mountain flowing; we take it as the flowing mountain.

The blue mountain also investigates walking and the east mountain also studies moving over water. Therefore, this study is the mountains' study. Without changing its body or mind, the mountain, with the face of a mountain, has come to be studying the road home.

6

Do not insult the mountains by saying that the blue mountain cannot walk and that the east mountain cannot move over water. Because the viewpoints of the lowly are crude, they wonder at the phrase "the blue mountain walks." Due to the inferiority of those who have heard little, they are surprised by the phrase, "flowing mountains." Although we can say that they do not even fully understand these [two] words "flowing water," they are simply drowning in small seeing and small hearing.

That being the case, we take as form and name the offering of the many merits [of the mountains], and we take that as their essence. Walking exists; flowing exists. There is a time when the mountain gives birth to a mountain child, and due to the principle that mountains become Buddhas and ancestors, Buddhas and ancestors have appeared like this.

7

Even when one possesses eyes that make visible the grasses, trees, earth, rocks, fences and walls, it is not doubting; it is not being moved; and it is not complete actualization. Even if one actualizes an occasion on which one is shown them "bedecked with the seven jewels," this is not the real returning. Even if there is the actualization of seeing them as the realm in which all Buddhas practice the Way, it is not necessarily a place one loves. Even if one is able to receive the ultimate visual actualization of them as the wondrous merits of all Buddhas, that is not all that their reality is. Each appearance is the individual body and its particular world, and these are not to be taken as the activity of the Way of the Buddhas and ancestors. They are partial, narrow views.

8

The Great Sage [Buddha] criticized "turning circumstances and turning the mind." The Buddha ancestors did not agree with "preaching one's mind and preaching one's nature." "Seeing the mind and seeing one's nature" is the daily activity of non-Buddhists. "Tying together words and tying together phrases" is not liberated speaking. There exists that which has penetrated and stripped away realms such as these. It is these statements: "The blue mountain walks constantly," and "The east mountain moves over water." You should investigate them in minute detail.

9

"The stone woman gives birth to a child in the night" means that the time when the stone woman gives birth to her child is at night. In general, there are male stones and female stones, and there are stones that are neither male nor female. They frequently assist heaven and assist earth. There are heaven stones and earth stones. Although this is something that is commonly spoken about, it is something that people rarely know. You should know the Buddhist principle of "giving birth to a child." When giving birth to a child, do parent and child both change? Could it just be a matter of studying how the child becoming the parent is "the actualization of giving birth to a child?" You should study and thoroughly investigate how when the parent becomes the child, this is the practice and enlightenment through the "actualization of giving birth to a child."

10

Great Master Unmon Kyoshin said, "East Mountain moves over water." The actualized main point of these words is that all mountains are East Mountain, and all of East Mountain moves over water. For this reason, it is the actualizing of the nine mountains of Mount Sumeru, it is their practicing and realizing. We call this "East Mountain." However, how did Unmon penetrate and strip away the skin, flesh, bones and marrow of East Mountain, in a way of life of practice and realization?

11

Today in Sung China there is a type of unlearned person that has become so numerous that the few real [students] are unable to oppose them. They say, "Stories like this 'East Mountain moves over water' and Nansen's sickle, are not rationally comprehensible." What they mean is that any verbal story that is connected to thoughts is not a Zen story of the Buddhas and ancestors. [They think that only] the stories that are not rationally comprehensible are the verbal stories of the Buddhas and ancestors. For this reason, they take Obaku's staff and Rinzai's shout -- since they are hard to understand rationally and are unconnected to thought -- as the great enlightenment that precedes the emergence of subtle signs. [They say that] the reason why the expedient means of the ancestors of old frequently made use of "phrases that cut entanglements" is that they are not rationally comprehensible.

12

Those who talk like this have not yet seen an authentic teacher and do not possess the eye of practice and study. They are unspeakably childish. Over the last two or three hundred years in China these sorts of demonic, disruptive, shaven-headed children have been numerous. What a pity that the Great Way of the Buddhas and ancestors is so diseased. Their understanding is no better than that of the sravakas of the lesser vehicle, and is more foolish than that of non-Buddhists. They are neither lay people nor monks, neither human nor heavenly beings. They are more foolish than animals that study the Buddha Way. The stories that those shaved-headed children call "not rationally comprehensible" are "not rationally comprehensible" to you alone, and this has nothing to do with the Buddhas and ancestors. You should not fail to study the rationally comprehensible path of the Buddhas and ancestors, just because you think that it is not "rationally comprehensible" to you.

13

Even if, in the end, it is not rationally comprehensible, the rational comprehension that you now articulate also misses it. Types like that are numerous throughout the Sung Empire. I have seen and heard them myself. What a pity that they do not know that thoughts are words and phrases, and that they do not know that words and phrases penetrate and strip away thoughts. When I was in Sung [China], I laughed at them, and they were silent -- they had nothing to say. It was just that mistake of "not rationally comprehensible." Who taught you [this]? Although we can say that you were without natural teachers, you were non-Buddhist infants by nature.

14

You should know this: this "East Mountain moves over water" is the bones and marrow of the Buddhas and ancestors. All water is actualized at the foot of East Mountain. For this reason, all mountains ride the clouds and walk through the heavens. All mountains are the very top of all waters, and striding upwards or downwards they are together over the water. The toe tips of all mountains frequently stride through all waters and because they cause all waters to shoot out, their walking is seven vertically and eight horizontally, and they are "not without practice and realization."

15

Water is something that is neither strong nor weak, neither wet nor dry, neither active nor quiescent, neither cold nor warm, neither existing nor not existing, neither deluded nor enlightened. When it freezes, it is harder than diamond. Who could break it? When it melts, it is softer than milk. Who could break it? Therefore, at once, it is impossible to wonder at the merits of its actualized existence.

16

You should take some time to study the occasion when you should look carefully in the ten directions at the water of the ten directions. This is not just studying at a time when one sees human or heavenly water; it is studying when water sees water, because it is water practicing and realizing water. There exists the

investigation of water speaking about water, and you should bring about the actualization of the path on which the self meets the self. You should move forward and backwards along the active path on which the other pierces the other, and you should leap clear.

17

In general, there are differences in seeing mountains and water, depending on the type [of being]. There are those that see what we call “water” as a jeweled necklace. However, they do not see a jeweled necklace as water. A form that we see as something else, they would see as water. What they see as a jeweled necklace, we see as water. There are those that see water as wondrous flowers. However, they don’t use flowers as if they were water. Demons see water as fierce fire; they see it as pus and blood. Dragons and fish see it as palaces; they see it as towers. Or they see it as the seven-treasure wish-fulfilling gem, or they see it as a forest barrier, or they see it as the Dharma nature of pure liberation and stripping-away, or they see it as true human form. Or they see it as the features of the body and the mind.

18

The fact that human beings see this as water is a cause and condition of life and death. Depending on the type [of being], what is seen is different, and we should take a moment to question this. Is it that all views vary when looking at one thing? Is it that we are mistakenly and confusedly taking all images as one thing? On top of your effort [regarding this question] you should make still more effort. Since this is the case, at once, practice, enlightenment, and following the Way also cannot be of one or two kinds, and the realm of ultimate reality also has a thousand types and ten thousand kinds. Moreover, as you keep the point of this teaching in mind – although we say that all the types of water are numerous, it is as if a fundamental water did not exist; it is as if all the types of water did not exist. However, all the waters, according to their types, do not depend on mind, do not depend on body, are not born from karma, are not dependent on self, are not dependent on other, and there exists penetration and dropping away that is dependent on water.

19

Since it is like this, water is not earth-water-fire-wind-space-consciousness, etc.; it is not green-yellow-red-white-black, etc.; it is not color-sound-smell-taste-touch-phenomena, etc. However, the water of earth-water-fire-wind-space, etc. is actualizing spontaneously. For this reason, it is very hard to speak about the nation and palaces of the present moment while clarifying what can be made or has been made. The statement that [water] is connected to the ring of space and the ring of wind [surrounding Mt. Sumeru] is not my truth, and is not the truth of others. This is [just] parroting the measure of narrow views. Such a statement derives from the thinking that [things] cannot dwell without a place of connection.

20

The Buddha said, “All phenomena ultimately are completely liberated, without having [any] abode.”

You should know this – although we say that by being liberated they are without constraints, all phenomena are dwelling in their [dharma] positions. However, when human beings see water, there is only the view that flowing does not stop. There are many kinds of that flowing, and this one is the narrow human view. It flows through the so-called earth; it flows through the sky; it flows up; it flows down. It flows in curves, and it flows in nine pools. Rising, it forms clouds and descending, it forms pools.

21

The Monshi says, “The tao of water rising to the heavens forms rain and dew, and descending to earth forms bays and rivers.”

Lay people today still speak like this. How very shameful it is when those who call themselves descendants of the Buddhas and ancestors are even more in the dark than the laity. It says that the tao of

water is not its recognition [of itself] as water, but water's well-manifested movement. Nor is it water's non-recognition [of itself] as water, but water's well-manifested movement.

22

It says, "rising to the heavens [it] forms rain and dew." You should know this – No matter through how many heavens upwards it rises, it forms rain and dew. The rain and dew differs in accordance with the world. To say that there is a place where the water does not reach is the teaching of the hinayana sravakas or the false teachings of non-Buddhists. Water is something that reaches into the midst of flames, and that reaches into the midst of the mind's thinking and discrimination, and that reaches into the midst of awareness and Buddha nature.

23

"Descending to the earth [it] forms bays and rivers." You should know this – When water descends to earth, it forms bays and rivers. The spirits of bays and rivers frequently become wise persons. Now ordinary fools and common types think that water necessarily is bays, rivers, seas and streams. That's what they think. This is not so. Water has formed bays and seas within water. Therefore water exists in places that are not bays or seas, and when water descends to earth, it is only taking the function of bays and seas.

24

Further, you should not study with the thought that because this is a place where water has formed bays and seas, worlds cannot exist and Buddha lands cannot exist [there]. Even in a single drop unlimited Buddha nations are actualized. Therefore, it is not that water exists inside Buddha lands, and it is not that Buddha lands exist inside water. Water's existence is not connected to the three times [of past, present, and future] and is not connected to dharma worlds. Moreover, although we say it is like this, it is the koan of the actualization of water.

Water necessarily reaches the places where the Buddhas and ancestors reach. Buddhas and ancestors necessarily actualize in places where water reaches. Accordingly, Buddhas and ancestors necessarily lift up water [as the Buddha raised the flower] and are taking it as body and mind, are taking it as thought.

25

Therefore, at once, nowhere in a text inside or outside [Buddhism] does it say that water does not rise upwards. The "tao of water" passes up, down, vertically and horizontally. However, in the Buddhist sutras, [it is written that] fire and wind rise upwards and earth and water descend downwards. There is a place to study this "up and down." It is the study of this so-called "up and down" in the Buddha Way. [This study] takes the place where so-called earth and water go as "down." It is not that it takes "down" as the place where earth and water go. The place where fire and wind go is "up." Although the dharma worlds are not at all necessarily related to the extent of up or down or the four directions, in accordance with the places where the four great [elements], the five great [elements], and the six great [elements], and so on function, we just provisionally construct the dharma world of the [ten] directions. It is not that we are taking the Heaven Without Concepts as "up," and the worst hell as "down." The worst hell is also an entire dharma world. The Heaven Without Concepts is also an entire dharma world.

26

However, when dragons or fish see water as a palace, it is just like when a person sees a palace. And [dragons and fish] do not know or see that it is flowing along. If someone who has a different perspective were to deliberately point out to them that their palaces are flowing water, the dragons and fish would instantly be shocked, just as we would be if we heard someone say that mountains flow. Moreover, there might be some [dragons and fish] who would maintain that there are things to be said like that about the rails, stairs, and pillars of the palaces, towers, and pavilions. You should quietly start to consider this

principle of things and gradually think about it. When we are not studying penetrating and dropping away from this perspective, it is not the liberation and dropping away of the ordinary person's body and mind, and it is not having investigated completely the lands of the Buddhas and ancestors, it is not having investigated completely ordinary people's lands, and it is not having investigated completely ordinary people's palaces and halls.

27

Although we can say that nowadays human beings know and see deeply the heart of the seas and the heart of the bays as water, we do not yet know what sort of thing dragons, fish, and so forth see and know as water or use as water. Do not foolishly conclude that what we see and know as water is what every type [of being] uses as water. When those who now study Buddhism want to study water, they should not just singlemindedly stop just with human beings. They should continue on and study the water of the Buddha Way. They should study the water used by the Buddhas and ancestors by asking themselves how they see it. They should study by asking whether water exists or water does not exist within the houses of the Buddhas and ancestors.

28

Mountains are always the dwelling place of the great sages. Both wise ones and sages have been taking mountains as their private chamber and they have been taking mountains as their body and mind. Through wise ones and sages the mountains are actualizing. In general, although you might wonder how many great sages and great wise ones have entered the mountains and are gathering there, once they entered the mountains, there isn't a single person who has met even one of them. They are just the actualization of the daily activity of the mountains, and beyond that there remains not a trace of their having entered.

29

The crown and the eyeball are vastly different on occasion when one glimpses a mountain in the world, and an occasion when one meets a mountain in the mountains. [Your] memory of not-flowing or [your] knowing and seeing not-flowing should not be equivalent to the knowing and seeing of dragons and fish. Other types [of beings] doubt that humans and heavenly beings obtain places in their own realms, or they do not [even] reach the point of doubting. Therefore, you should study with the Buddhas and ancestors the phrase "the mountain flows," and you should not give way to surprise or doubt. Holding up one is this flowing, and holding up one is this not-flowing. One time around is flowing, and one time around is not-flowing. Whatever appears to be without an investigation of this is not the Tathagata's True Dharma Wheel.

30

An old Buddha said, "If you want not to welcome the karma of endless [hell], do not revile the Tathagata's True Dharma Wheel."

You should inscribe these words in your skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. You should inscribe them on your body and mind, directly and indirectly. You should inscribe them on emptiness. You should inscribe them on form. They have been inscribed on the trees and the rocks, and they have been inscribed on the fields and the villages.

31

In general, although they say that mountains belong to the nation, mountains belong to the people who love them. When the mountains necessarily love their master, sages and wise ones, those of great virtue, enter the mountains. When the sages and wise ones live in the mountains, the mountains belong to them, and that is why trees and rocks are thick and dense and birds and beasts have superior spirits. This is because the sages and wise ones cause them to be covered with virtue. You should know this – it is true that mountains favor the wise. It is true that mountains favor the sages.

32

There are many fine examples from past and present where emperors went into the mountains and bowed to wise persons and bowed and asked questions of great sages. At such times, venerating them with respect for a teacher, the [emperors] did not at all conform to the rules of society. In the places where the influence of the sages reached, [the emperors] did not in the least exert their will over the mountain's wise ones. You should come to know the fact that the mountain is separate from human society. It is said that once at Kuto [mountain] in [the realm of] Waho, the Yellow Emperor bowed to and entreated Kosei, asking him while crawling on his knees and striking his head [on the ground].

33

Moreover, Shakyamuni Buddha had left the palace of his father, the king, and entered the mountains. Nevertheless, his father the king, did not resent the mountains. His father the king did not wonder about the companions who were teaching the crown prince in the mountains. During his twelve year of practicing the way he was often in the mountains. His attainment of the Way as Dharma King was also in the mountains. Truly even the Wheel King does not exert his will over the mountains. You should know this – mountains are not in the human realm, and they are not in the heavenly realm. You cannot experience mountains using the standards of human thought. If we did not make a comparison with the flowing of the human realm, who would doubt that mountains flow and mountains do not flow.

34

There have also been sages and wise ones since ancient times who lived like that by the water. When you live by the water, there is catching fish, there is catching people, and there is catching the Way. These are all traditions from the past of being on the water. Moreover, going further, there should be catching the self, there should be catching the hook, being caught by the hook, and being caught by the Way.

Long ago Priest Tokujo suddenly left Yakuzan and went to live in the heart of the rivers. Right after that he found the wise sage of Katei River. Was this not catching the fish? Was this not catching a person? Was this not catching water? Was this not catching himself? The person who is able to see Tokujo is [himself] Tokujo. Tokujo grasping a person is [his] meeting that person.

35

We say that water exists in the world, but that is not all. Worlds exist within the realm of water. This is not only the case in water. Sentient worlds exist also within clouds. Sentient worlds exist also within wind. Sentient worlds exist also within fire. Sentient worlds exist also within earth. Sentient worlds exist also within Dharma worlds. Sentient worlds exist also within a single blade of grass. Sentient worlds exist also within a single staff. Just as there are sentient worlds, these places necessarily possess worlds of Buddhas and Ancestors. You should carefully study teachings of this kind.

36

Therefore, water is the palace of the true dragon; it is not [about] flowing or falling. To recognize only that it flows, [to recognize only] the word “flow,” is to disrespect water, because, for example, you force it to be not-flowing. Water is nothing other than the absolute reality of water just as it is; it is the benefit of “water being water.” It is not “flowing.” By investigating a single water's flowing and by investigating not-flowing, the exhaustive investigation of 10,000 Dharmas at once is actualized.

With mountains, too, there are mountains hidden in gems; there are mountains hidden in swamps; there are mountains hidden in the sky; there are mountains hidden in mountains; and in the hidden-away there is the study of hidden-away mountaineering.

37

An old Buddha said, “Mountains are mountains. Water is water.” This teaching is not saying that “[these] mountains are [these] mountains,” it is saying that mountains are [these] mountains. Therefore, you should investigate [this] mountain, and when you exhaust mountains, it will be an effort [made together] with mountains.

These kinds of mountains and waters, on their own, create wise ones, and they create sages.

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