



Ki Sam Bo Ge

Gatha of refuge in the Three Jewels

from Shijonoshō (Commentaries on the Contemplation Sutra)

by master Shan-Tao

1. Let all monks and laymen gathered here
awake the mind of the pure bodhicitta!
How difficult it is to reject all known pleasures
and wander off the world of samsara!
How hard it is to seek the teaching of Buddha!
2. Let us all develop the determination to accept
our mind indestructible and clear as a diamond!
Let us all close forever the gate to existence
ruled by four kinds of bonno: bonno of desire,
bonno of forms, bonno of greed and bonno of arrogance!
Let us all enter without a doubt Amida's Energy,
which is the ocean-like Wisdom and Compassion.
Let us become one with Him and in a deep reverence
repeat after our master Vasubandhu:
3. Being one with Buddha, we take refuge
in the Unlimitedness of Ten Directions;
in the Ocean of Dharmakaya of all Buddhas;
in every Sambhogakaya and every Nirmanakaya.
4. We take refuge in every bodhisattva,
as well as in every practitioner of the Dharma –
although the number of them is inconceivable.
They all are the manifestation of Amida's Land!
They all are the gorgeous decorations of Amida's Jodo!
They emanate the Law of ten stages as great as the ocean,
which knows neither any shores nor a bottom;
their Wisdom of the three lower levels sustains the world.
5. These who practiced during 10 long kalpas,
as well as those who haven't finished such a task yet;
These, who have already perfected their wisdom,
as well as those who are still trying to accomplish that;
These with an already extinct bonno,
as well as those who are still struggling within it;
These who live among us thanks to a residual karma,

as well as those who are fully emancipated;

6. These who live in nonretrogression with a pinch of hakarai,
as well as those totally free from any calculation;
These already gifted with the mind of true shinjin,
as well as those who are still dreaming of such treasure;
These blessed by the happiness of the perfect satori,
as well as those now approaching the Perfection;
They all are being transformed into Amida's Mind;
7. They all are in Oneness by entering ultimate nirvana."
Let everyone present here, take refuge
in the Three Sacred Buddha's Bodies.
8. Let us accept the supernatural protection of Hongan –
the invisible power, which knows no obstacles.
We, the disciples of Buddha ,together with
all possible sages of the Three Vehicles,
9. equally long to grasp the Mind of Compassion,
equally seek the life of nonretrogression,
equally wish to be provided by the Tariki Power
with the precious presence of all Buddhas.
10. Trapped in bodies sculptured by ignorance,
life after life we have been rolling along
like stones over a cliff of a steep mountain.
Through this gatha we encounter Sakyamuni Buddha,
the special treasure - in our unfortunate time
which misinterprets the true Dharma
11. We learn from Him about Hongan – Amida's Vow –
the Ultimate Gate into Eternal Happiness.
Everyone, who thanks to these verses
would manage to see the exquisite face of Amida,
shall realize in a single moment the benefits of
13 visual contemplations and lives from now on
as an emancipated from the bonno bondage.
12. The inconceivable nature of such a realization is
a supreme-level teaching itself protected carefully
in the treasure-house of the Contemplation Sutra.
This gatha emerges from the Mind of Buddha
to leads us into the Oneness with Amida.
13. All Buddhas, as numerous as the particles of sand,
by a full bright spectrum of their mystic powers
indicate Amida's teaching delivered by Sakyamuni
as the Ultimate Gate called Jodo Mon.
14. Let us all vow to share each given to us merit
with all sentient beings without any discrimination
so as enable them to awake the mind of Bodhi via
the method known as "The Birth in the Pure Land."

(direct translation from old Chinese original by Rev. Myoshu A. Jdrzejewska, with the help of Rev. Esho Muraiishi with kanji interpretation)