

Chan Teacher Yongjia Zhenjue's Verse Giving Rise to the Vow
Yōka Shinkaku Zenji Hotsuganmon
永嘉真覺禪師發願文

Yongjia is a disciple of the Sixth Ancestor and author of "Song of Verifying the Way"
and is also known as Xuanjue/Genkaku, 665-713
Taisho Tripitaka Volume 48, number 2023 (1064b16 - 1065a28)

Translated by Kōkyō Henkel, 2021

I bow my head to the ground to completely perfect all-knowing awakening:
silent, still, peaceful equality, the original true source,
Harmonious with all, firm and extraordinary, without existence or nonexistence,
wisdom light universally shining in every dust-mote.

I bow my head to the ground, with deep affirmation, to the truth of wondrous awakening,
to the great profound twelve divisions of sutra:
without words, without letters, without sentences of explanation,
listening to the one sound, all is bright and clear.

I bow my head to the ground to all clear and pure good sages
in the ten directions, peaceful and harmonious true monks:
holding and maintaining pure precepts without violation,
raising the khakkara staff and carrying the (abhisheka) jar, benefitting all as teachers,
Saving the egg born, womb born, and moisture born,
those with form and without form, with perception and no perception,
those without existence and without nonexistence, those of mixed perceptions,
all six realms of samsara, without ceasing.

I now bow my head to the ground, taking refuge in the three treasures.

Universally, for all living beings, I give rise to bodhichitta.

For all those living beings drowning in the sea of suffering,
may all buddhas, the dharma, and sangha may bring forth their power.
May kindness, compassion, and skillful means uproot all suffering,
without giving up the expansive vow to aid all living beings.

By the transforming power of unhindered salvation without exhaustion,
may living beings as numerous as the sands of the Ganges attain true awakening.

I speak this verse:

I repeatedly bow my head to the ground, taking refuge in all buddhas in the ten directions
and three times, the dharma and sangha, receiving the power of the Three Treasures.

With determined heart, giving rise to the vow (hotsugan) to practice unsurpassed bodhi,
I now resolve to give over this life to reach the completion of true awakening.

In this very place I completely resolve to diligently request, without ceasing:

If I have not yet attained the Way, may this body have no sickness, long-life, and not die young.
With this upright life, until the end of time, may I not see evil appearances,
with no fear and terror, not being born in the lower realms.

May this body not suffer, this mind not be sad or confused, may true wisdom shine brightly.
May I not be overcome by darkness.

May I not enter the realms of captive animals or hungry ghosts.
May I not receive a life as a creature of water, land, or sky, a celestial demon outside the Way,
a dark and gloomy demonic spirit, or any other such body or form that can be comprehended.
May I always attain a human body, intelligent and bright, truly upright.
May I not be born in evil lands, nor under the reign of evil kings,
Not be born in border lands (with no Dharma), not be destitute or suffer hardships,
Not be born as a slave, servant, woman, eunuch with two sex organs,
with yellow hair, black teeth, stubborn, stupid, dense, and dull-witted,
Ugly, coarse, blind, deaf, mute, or with any possible evil –
May I not be born in such a way.
May I be born and remain in a central land (where Dharma is taught), in a home with true faith,
always attaining a male body with six senses complete,
Upright and correct, fragrant and clean, without dirt or filth,
with determined intention, with a harmonious and graceful body, and peaceful mind of stillness,
Without greed, hate, and delusion, eternally cutting off the three poisons,
refraining from all evil, always doing all good,
Not serving kings or ministers, not being a (government) messenger,
Not wishing for honor or reward, but being peaceful and poor, transcending the world,
With few desires, knowing contentment, not raising or accumulating domestic animals,
Receiving whatever clothing and food is offered for the body, not taking what is not given,
Not killing living beings, not eating fish or meat,
With respect and love, cherishing and understanding, thus will I not be changed.
May my actions naturally be soft and gentle, not demanding too much from people,
Not calling myself good, not taking part in disapproving of others,
With aversion and attraction pacified and equalized, not arousing discrimination,
without hate or attachment.
Not accumulating wealth for myself, not being stingy, not encroaching upon others' happiness,
Constantly keeping an upright heart and nonviolent mind, always happy, humble and modest,
With a mouth speaking no evil, a body doing no evil, a mind not currying favor or crooked,
The three karmas (of body, speech, and mind) pure, settled and resting,
peaceful and withdrawn, without any hindrances or difficulties.
As far as stealing and coercing, being a traitor to the king's law,
Being imprisoned, beaten, whipped, and chained,
Encountering knives, guns, arrows, spears, savage beasts, or poisonous insects,
falling from mountain peaks, drowning in water,
Being burned by fire, caught in the wind of cyclones, and frightened by thunder,
Being under tree branches breaking, and landslides of rocks,
Being in collapsing halls with rotten beams, being struck and beaten, with terror and fear,
being chased, surrounded and trapped,
Held, seized, captured, and tied, falsely accused, slandered, condemned and dragged away:
Of all these many difficult circumstances, may I not receive any of them.
When encountering calamities from flying evil spirits or celestial activities, poisonous epidemics,
wicked demons, and monstrous mountain spirits,
Whether at a river, at an ocean, or a high mountain summit,
any tree spirits dwelling or resting there,

Ordinary spirits, earth spirits, who hear my name or see my form,
(encountering them) may I arouse bodhichitta.
Completely covering and protecting, not intruding or angry,
Day and night peaceful and humble, without fear or worry,
May the four great elements be healthy and strong, the six senses pure and clear,
Not defiling the six sense objects, mind without confused thoughts.
May I not have dark obstructions, not have life cut off,
Not manifest empty existence, remote and separated from all appearances,
With faith, respect, ability, benevolence, not holding a self,
Realization and liberation bright, life after life studying and practicing,
With true wisdom, resolute and strong, not taken in by demons,
May I have a long lifespan, and in my later years be peaceful and quick to be happy.
May I give up a body and receive a body, without having hated enemies,
With all living beings being the same as good friends.
Depending on valuing buddha and hearing dharma,
A child of truth leaves home for the harmonious unity of the sangha,
Body after body's clothing not other than the kashaya robe,
Meal after meal's eating vessel not other than the almsbowl,
Bodhichitta resolute and strong, not arrogant or lazy,
Honoring the dignified Three Treasures, always practicing brahmacharya,
Intimate and close with bright teachers, following kalyanamitras,
With deep trust in the true dharma, diligently practicing the six paramitas,
Reading and reciting the Mahayana, practicing the Way, prostrating,
(Offering) wondrous flavors and fragrant flowers, the sound of melodic praise,
With lamps illuminating the terrace, observing mountains, oceans, forests, and springs,
In the middle of the sky, level ground, a place abiding between.
In each dust-mote above, completely holding and presenting offerings,
Gathering a collection of merit and virtue dedicated to assisting bodhi.
Thinking stopped, righteous, determined, happy, relaxed, quiet,
Pure and simple, silent and still, not fond of noisy clamor,
Not fond of crowds or beautiful dwellings, but abiding alone,
Without seeking or possessiveness, mind in samadhi and prajna,
The six realms satisfied, transforming and saving living beings,
Following the mind of vow, self-abiding without hindrance.
Myriad activities complete, approaching wondrous spirit, without poverty,
True and upright, completely bright determination, attaining the Buddha-Way.
May these good roots universally extend throughout the realms of the ten directions.
From the destitute below to the highest peak above, may this wind pervade everywhere.
In the heavens above, the human realm between, and all six realms of life,
To all with consciousness, my merit and virtue I completely give to living beings.
To the farthest reaches of every dust-mote, may not only one living being
Follow me in attaining these good roots.
Universally may everyone be filled with this healing adornment.
For all those suffering in the hell realm, "namo buddha, dharma, sangha,"
Calling the names of buddha, dharma, sangha, may all who suffer be liberated.

For all those suffering in the hungry ghost realm, “namo buddha, dharma, sangha,”
Calling the names of buddha, dharma, sangha, may all who suffer be liberated.
For all those suffering in the animal realm, “namo buddha, dharma, sangha,”
Calling the names of buddha, dharma, sangha, may all who suffer be liberated.
For all those in the heaven, human, and asura realms,
As many as Ganges sands, all cherished forms of life,
With eight kinds of painful urgent suffering,
“Namo buddha, dharma, sangha,”
May my good roots universally release all bondage.
“Namo buddhas of the three times, namo the sutras,
The bodhisattva and shravaka sangha, assembly of sages in every dust-mote.”
Not giving up the source of kindness and compassion,
Gathering and receiving the multitude of all living beings,
To the farthest reaches of space, all cherished life:
May all take refuge in buddha, dharma, and sangha.
Departing from suffering, leaving the three lower realms,
May all who suffer leap over the three worlds (of samsara),
Each giving rise to bodhichitta, day and night practicing prajna,
Life after life, with diligent spirit progressing, thus constantly rescuing,
First attaining bodhi, I commit and vow to help save and liberate all.
I will practice the Way and do prostrations,
I will recite the sutras and buddha’s name,
I will practice shila, samadhi, and prajna.
Namo buddha, dharma, sangha. May all living beings universally and
Completely attain the Buddha-Way.
I will cherish all life equally and with firm resolve seek bodhi.
I bow my head to buddha, dharma, and sangha.
I vow to soon attain true awakening.