

The Record of Ippen: Verse in Japanese

TRANSLATED BY DENNIS HIROTA

HYMN OF THE SPECIAL VOW OF AMIDA (Betsugan wasan)

Search into yourself: a bubble on the stream—
Once dying away nothing's left of a man.
Ponder your life, and it's shimmer of the moon—
Unstaying through rise and fall of each fleeting breath.
Though we cherish our forms in the good paths
Of men and devas, none can keep them.
The suffering in hell, as famished ghosts, as beasts,
We all abhor, yet easily take on again.
Of the various shapes before our eyes—
When we go blind, no form or color appears.
As for the words that assail our ears—
Once deaf, no voice can be heard.
The smelling of fragrances, the tasting of tastes,
Are for but a brief span.
When breath's manipulations have come to a halt,
No functioning remains to this self.
From far, far in the distant past,
Down to this day, this very instant,
Those things we have most longed for
Have not been attained, and we sorrow.

* This installment of the *Ippen Shōnin goroku* includes Ippen's two surviving pieces in *wasan* form and a selection of half of his *waka*. The *wasan* form—twelve syllable lines in four-line stanzas—has been widely used in Buddhist worship since the Heian period and particularly valued in Jishū, as evidenced by the number of old commentaries on the first of Ippen's *wasan* and the many examples of the form by later Jishū masters. The translation follows the text in Ōhashi Shun'edō, ed., *Hōnen, Ippen, Nihon Shisō Taikei 10* (Tokyo: Iwanami-shoten, 1971).

Some have thoroughly grasped the dharma-gates
 Of the Path of Sages and Birth in the Pure Land,
 But their delusional, samsaric thinking unbroken,
 It all turns to karma for more transmigration.
 With minds that have deviated completely from the truth
 Of the nondiscrimination of good and evil,
 We consider wrong and right to be one:
 This insight is darkness; how shameful it is!
 "Blind passions are in themselves enlightenment"—
 But hearing this, we only go on committing evil;
 Though we say "Samsara as such is nirvana,"
 Dearly do we cherish this life.
 Buddha's dharma-body (*hosshin*) of original, fundamental purity
 Is the ever-abiding Buddha of thusness;
 But since there is neither illusion nor enlightenment,
 Knowing and not knowing are both useless.
 His recompense body (*hōjin*), perfectly furnished with a myriad practices,
 Is Buddha of the fusion of dharmic reason and wisdom;
 Since there's no duality of sphere of reason and wisdom,
 It's useless to think on him or utter his name.
 His assumed body (*ōjin*), which severs all evil and practices good,
 Is Buddha who treats the sick according to their conditions;
 For evil people of the ten transgressions and five damning acts,
 It's useless to their emancipation without regard to condition.
 But the recompense body of the Name, the fulfilled cause of birth,
 Is Buddha that brings the foolish being to emancipation;
 His is the Vow to save all beings of the ten quarters,
 So there's no lapse of allowing even one to slip by.
 The Name of Amida's unique and all-surpassing Vow
 Embodies the inconceivable working of Other Power,
 So when a person just says this Name, leaving everything to his lips,
 In that voicing all his evil in birth-and-death vanishes.
 Beyond the single thought-instant of nembutsu at the start
 There are no final ten utterances at death;
 Rather, start is made in adding thought-instant on thought-instant,
 And the thought-instant reaching its limit is the end.
 Once our delusional thinking has completely ceased,
 There is neither start nor finish, beginning nor end;

In the oneness of Buddha and sentient being
 Lies the true saying of Namu-amida-butsu.
 Quickly cast off your myriad entanglements,
 And single-heartedly entrusting yourself to Amida,
 Let your breath be spent in Namu-amida-butsu:
 This is the finish of our delusional thought.
 At that moment, from the realm of Ultimate Bliss,
 Amida, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta,
 With a host of the saintly, countless as sands of the Ganges,
 Manifest themselves before the practitioner;
 All together they grant him their hands,
 Welcoming him and drawing him along.¹

Immediately he mounts a golden lotus dais
 And, following after the Buddha,
 In a moment's passage
 Into the Pure Land of Peace he is born.
 Descending from the lotus dais, the practitioner
 Casts his whole body to the ground and pays homage.
 Then led by the bodhisattvas,
 At last he is brought into the Buddha's presence.
 To the great jewel palace hall he makes his way
 To hear the Buddha preach the Dharma.
 Climbing the jewel tree tower,
 Out in the distance he sees the other worlds;
 Having reached the Realm of Peace,
 He returns to defiled lands to save all beings:
 Thus the Vow of compassion knows no bounds;
 For long ages he will return with gratitude Amida's care.

¹ The text of *Betsugan wasan* as it appears in *Hijiri-e* scroll 9 and an Edo period commentary ends here. The final sixteen-line section appears in manuscript by 1599 and was probably added during the Muromachi period, though when and by whom is unknown. It has been argued that this final section, apparently appended to elaborate the popular concept of Amida's coming (*rinjū raikō*), is stylistically flawed and internally inconsistent, and therefore probably was not by Ippen; and that it shows the influence of *wasan* by Genshin, from which the first four lines were borrowed (Taya Raishun, *Wasan shi gaisetsu*, Kyoto, 1933).

A GIST IN TELLING WORDS (Hyaku rikugo)

While transmigrating through the six paths
 There's no one for company;
 Alone we are born, alone we die:
 Full of sorrow this road of birth-and-death.
 Whether Summit Heaven above clouds
 Or deepest Avīci hell below,
 There's no niche that we have not reached
 In accord with karma of good and evil.
 But it's rare for us to obtain birth
 In the good realms of men and devas—
 Always making the three evil paths
 Our abode, and never emerging.
 In Black Ropes or the Hell of Throngs, we scorch to the bone;
 On Bristling Sword Mountain, in Bladed Trees, our livers are rent;
 Turning into famished ghosts, we hunger for food;
 And grievous recompense too the stupidity of beasts.
 When this self that suffers such pain and affliction
 Escapes for a little from the three evil paths
 And chances to take on human form,
 Why then do we not renounce birth-and-death?
 Although we become men in form,
 Our worldly desires know no end;
 As for our suffering in body and mind,
 Our emergence from hell is of no avail.
 A lust for things at the heart's roots
 Is no different from karmic recompense as a famished ghost;
 To vie in harboring malicious intent
 Is precisely the life of beasts.
 The self that, conjuring up such delusive thoughts,
 Hastens on, anxious that already dawn's come, or now dusk,
 Is bound by the chains of the five appetites
 And does not quit this Burning House—how miserable it is!
 Though we see out a thousand autumns, a myriad years,
 The interval is still but a lightning flash;

Sun and moon undetained in their course,
 Presently death's hour arrives.
 The sufferings of birth, old age, sickness, and death
 Make exception of no man;
 Indiscriminately they come to noble and common, high and low;
 Neither poor nor rich have escape.
 As long as the glistening dew of life abides,
 One must polish its jeweled abode, the flourishing body;
 But the winds of impermanence blowing just once,
 And the form, life's flower, is dispersed.
 Assuming the hundred thousand myriad things of this world—
 From father, mother, wife, and child
 To treasured possessions and dwelling—
 Exist as they are solely for your own sake,
 You cherish yourself with tender care.
 But when the time comes for soul to depart alone,
 Casting aside even your body—
 Who will see you off down the Dark Path?
 Though family and relatives gather
 And, wailing aloud, cling to the corpse,
 Drawn along by your karma you go wandering in delusion:
 Hard is it to awaken from the dream of birth-and-death!
 But once hearing these truths,
 We are no longer attached to body, life, and possessions;
 Casting away completely the realm of delusional thoughts,
 We become a person standing alone.
 In the space of vast kalpas and countless lives,
 Every being has been our mother and father;
 We should take all sentient beings as companions, then,
 And quickly attain the Pure Land.
 To reach the borders of the Uncreated,
 Just abandon—this is the true response of gratitude.
 Give away to sentient beings everywhere
 The nembutsu emerging from your lips,
 And though nowhere do you have a settled abode
 Of which to think, "This is my permanent dwelling,"
 Since, after all, houses abound,
 You'll never be drenched by the rains.

In sheltering bodily existence a while,
 The owner and you are one:
 When, in the end, a person abandons it and goes,
 What does being owner amount to?
 Realizing that from the outset the world's a house in flames,
 We do not clamor to see it consumed by fire;
 And although we observe much that is ruined and worn,
 We've no will at all to make repairs.
 Where a single mat is spread out,
 There's no feeling of confinement;
 Rising and retiring in utterance of the Name
 Is the abode where no delusive thoughts arise.
 The halls for nembutsu practice are all superfluous;
 The Name, Namu-amida-butsu, that I keep
 Whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying,
 Is my altarpiece—one far too precious for me.
 Being indisposed toward desire for gain,
 I've no wish to collect donations as a wandering monk;
 Not apart from the five kinds of impurity,
 I have vowed not to preach the Dharma.
 With aversion for sect superiors and their pomp,
 I do not want monk disciples;
 Never in search of lay supporters,
 I have no flattery for anyone.
 In the brief span this body exists,
 Clothing and food are of course indispensable;
 But taking them to be fruits of former lives,
 I don't endeavor to obtain them at all.
 I do not wander about to beg, expending many words,
 Nor flatter, nor seek, nor express desires,
 And still, after all, people give me alms—
 Just that bit to sustain my life.
 If I end up unprovided with even that,
 Then assuredly I will starve to death.
 Dying, I will be born in the Pure Land,
 Where there will be wondrous sustenance.
 Since I have no taste for worldly success,
 My garments are always random;

Leaving it to others to clothe me as they will,
 I root myself in care-lessness.
 Padded robe, thin hemp, or paper garb,
 An old straw mat as a scrap of raincloak—
 Since it's only to stave off the chill,
 I count on what there is to cover myself.
 The food to support my life
 Is what I happen on, just as it is;
 Since I am not one to lament my death,
 There is nothing I shun as a cause of disease;
 Nor am I one to be pained by weakness,
 So I desire nothing for the sake of strength;
 And since I give no thought to a hue of vitality,
 I'm never concerned about relishing tastes.
 Both the good and the evil that I do
 Are karma for transmigration in birth-and-death;
 Hence, in all the three realms and six paths,
 There is nothing at all that I envy.
 When we recite Namu-amida-butsu,
 Taking refuge in Amida Buddha,
 We are illumined by the light that grasps each being,
 And ours becomes true service to Amida.
 From that moment, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta
 are our excellent companions:
 Why should we seek fellow practitioners?
 When all Buddhas bestow their protection,
 We need have no fear of unforeseen dangers.
 Even to know these truths
 Is solely by virtue of the Buddha's benevolence:
 When we realize this, joy awakens within us,
 And more and more the nembutsu rises to our lips.
 If not for the sake of all sentient beings,
 There's no point in my wandering through this world.
 One year I made a pilgrimage to the Kumano shrine;
 While worshiping at the Hall of Witness,
 I received a miraculous revelation in a dream,
 And I pass my life trusting in what it said—

Not counting on it for my own afterlife:

It's for the benefit of all universally.

Yet, for those who entrust themselves to me,

That's filled with impurity and in the end

To be discarded as dirt, how can there be any benefit?

And those who slander me surely commit no evil.

But with the Name that we utter with our lips:

Through its virtues that surpass conceivability,

All those within the borders of perception and conception

Will waken from the dream of birth-and-death;

It benefits both those who entrust to it and those who slander.

The Name that embodies Other Power beyond conception

Is indeed the body of practice existing fundamentally, without beginning:

Do not think you practice it now for the first time.

Buddha-nature is One originally,

Without distinction of illusion and enlightenment,

But chancing to stir up delusional thoughts,

We imagine ourselves in illusion—how preposterous!

The Primal Vow of Amida Buddha, though,

Is given to sentient beings entangled in illusion;

It is for the sake of the foolish and ignorant,

So neither wisdom nor eloquence is required;

Nor is almsgiving or the observing of precepts:

The transgressions of monks need not bring despair.

Since those of meditative and non-meditative practices are both embraced,

Nothing obstructs us, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying;

There is no discrimination of good and evil,

So the man of evil karma is not abandoned.

Since none of the various good practices brings about birth,

I don't strive to accumulate roots of good.

Not toying with my manner to make it attractive,

There's no adorning myself for the eyes of others.

Not relying on my mind and its calculation,

Even desire for enlightenment has died away.

The Name of the Buddha of Immeasurable Life,

Which lies beyond the light and wisdom of the Buddhas,

Is not a dharma of illusion-and-enlightenment;

Hence Amida is praised as the Buddha of Unfathomable Light.

In the moment of entrusting to this dharma,
There is no separation between Buddha and sentient being;
The three modes of action of each are never apart from the other;
Hence Amida is called the Buddha of Unimpeded Light.
Bringing all calculative thinking to a halt,
Reverently entrust yourself to the Buddha;
And to the limit of breath's passage in and out,
Utter Namu-amida-butsu.

On seeing people amusing themselves, playing wind and string instruments
in a nembutu *dōjō* (hall for practice):²

*Tsu no kuni ya
nani wa mo nori no
koto no ha wa
ashikarikeri to
omoishiru beshi*

That all you may do
is the Dharma—
word-leaves that reveal it—
is, you must see, hollow
truth for you:
even in Tsu,
at Naniwa of the reeds.

*ato mo naki
kumo ni arasou
kokoro koso
nakanaka tsuki no
sawari to wa nare*

The mind struggling to defeat
this cloud cover
of no substance
obscures instead
the light of the moon.

At Onodera in Shimotsuke province, on seeing the nuns all remove their
surplices (*kesa*) and so on in a sudden downpour:

*fureba nure
nurureba kawaku
sode no ue o
ame tote itou
hito zo hakanaki*

Sleeves get wet when there's rain
and once wet
they dry—
So bent to no purpose
the one
who recoils from this rain.

² The instruments mentioned were used in worship. Ippen was probably admonishing against the singing of popular songs with Buddhist messages, and may have based his poem on the following by the *yūjo* ("play girl") Miyagi, included in the *Goshūishū*: "And what / is not the Dharma? / Even to play and sport— / Thus I've heard it said / in Tsu, at Naniwa." Naniwa (played on to mean *nani wa mo*, "anything whatever"), on Osaka Bay, was famed for its reeds (*ashi*, homophonous with "evil") and often appears in literature associated with the cutting of reeds (*ashikari*, "evil").

When he performed a service at the grave of his grandfather Michinobu:

*hakanashi ya
shibashi kabane no
kuchinu hodo
nohara no tsuchi wa
yoso ni miekeri*

This vanity!
For the little while
that corpse is undecayed,
earth of the meadow
appears
to be something other.

*mi o sutsuru
sutsuru kokoro o
sutetsureba
omoi naki yo ni
sumizome no sode*

Having cast body away,
and cast away the mind
that had cast away,
I dwell in a world free of thought,
and, mind clear,
in these sleeves of monk's black.

In answer to people who asked about purple clouds forming and flowers falling from the sky:³

*sakeba saki
chiru wa onore to
chiru hana no
kotowari ni koso
mi wa narinikeri*

Blossoms flower when they flower,
fall of themselves when
they fall:
and in its fruition,
my life's become
this same Dharma-truth.

*hana wa iro
tsuki wa hikari to
nagamureba
kokoro wa mono o
omowazarikeri*

Blossoms are their hues,
the moon its light:
Gazing and seeing them just so,
the mind ceases
its pensive thinking of things.

³ *Hijiri-e* 6 records this incident, when purple clouds and flowers falling from the sky—usually regarded as auspicious signs of Amida's coming for one at the time of death—appeared where Ippen was staying. Ippen answered those who questioned him, "About the flowers, go to the flowers; of purple clouds, ask the purple clouds: I do not know." *Mi* (body, self) is associated with its homophone meaning "fruit."

Once, while passing through a moor, he came upon a large number of human skeletons:

*kawa ni koso
otoko onna no
iro mo are
hone ni wa kawaru
hito kata mo nashi*

In the skin appear the hues
of man and woman.
In bone,
not even a distinguishing
human mark
remains.

To a man who said that to dance while reciting the Name was scandalous:

*haneba hane
odoraba odore
haru koma no
nori no michi oba
shiru hito zo shiru*

If he leaps, let him leap!
if he dances, let him dance—
a spring colt riding the road:
The Way
is known
to him who knows.

The man responded: "If he were one/ who had mounted and quieted/ his heart's colt,/ surely he would not/ dance and leap thus." Ippen answered:

*tomo hane yo
kakute mo odore
kokoro-goma
Mida no mi-nori to
kiku zo ureshiki*

But leap still!
And yet dance!
My heart's colt—
joyful to hear
it's the teaching of Amida.

*kokoro yori
kokoro o en to
kokoroete
kokoro ni mayou
kokoro narikeri*

Set your mind
to grasp the mind
with the mind
and yours is a mind
at a loss
for the mind.

*suteyarade
kokoro to yo oba
nagekikeri
no ni mo yama ni mo
sumarekeru mi o*

For not abandoning himself,
a person that might live
in the moors or the mountains
lies, of his own choice,
in lament of this world.

*kokoro oba
ikanaru mono to
shiranedomo
na o tonaureba
hotoke ni zo naru*

Though not knowing
the mind
as what it is,
Just say the Name,
and you become Buddha.

*oshimu na yo
mayou kokoro no
Ōe yama
Iku no no tsuyu to
kie yasuki mi o*

Cherish no attachments
to your self,
your mind a mountain
of delusive thoughts high as Ōe:
It will vanish like the dew
off the far fields of Iku.⁴

*kokoro kara
nagaruru mizu o
sekitomete
onore to fuchi ni
mi o shizumekeri*

Seeking to dam the waters
that drain from the heart,
of yourself,
in deep pools
you have submerged yourself.

*kokoro oba
kokoro no ada to
kokoroete
kokoro no naki o
kokoro to wa seyo*

Grasping that the mind
is adversary
to the mind,
realize no-mind
as your own mind.

⁴ Mount Ōe (ōi, "much," "many") was often associated in verse with Iku ("to go") moor, through which the road to Mount Ōe passed.

*tonikaku ni
kokoro wa mayou
mono nareba
namu-amida-butsu zo
nishi e yuku michi*

Heart and mind waver
in confusion
this way and that:
Only Namu-amida-butsu
is the path
to the West.

*nembutsu ni mo
ono ga kokoro o
hikasureba
mi o seme tama no
tsuyu to shirazu ya*

Let your calculating mind be drawn
even into utterance of the nembutsu,
and you'll be tormented
by your rosary,
it beads turned thus
into dew.

Shinnen Shōnin of Yokawa on Mount Hiei wrote in a letter: "As heart's waters/ run clear or turbid,/ variously,/ so they reflect and do not reflect/ luminous clouds of Amida's coming." In response:⁵

*sumi sumamu
kokoro wa mizu no
awa nareba
kietaru iro ya
murasaki no kumo*

The heart,
whether clear or confused,
is but froth on the stream:
the very hue
of its vanishing
is those purple clouds.

⁵ In a letter to Shinnen, Ippen writes: "Further, does not the matter of purple clouds and heavenly flowers—these being auspicious signs of the saying of the Name that surpasses conception—lie beyond the measure and calculation of foolish beings? We must, exhausting our foolish minds, well discern those flowers also." See "The Record of Ippen: Letters," *EB* Vol. XI, No. 1 (May 1978), p. 62.

Attached to a reply to an Imperial consort, the younger sister of Lord Saionji:⁶

*hotoke koso
inochi to mi to no
aruji nare
waga ware naranu
kokoro furumai*

It is Amida who is master
of my life
and body—
acting freely
in all acts of my mind
that is not my mind.

After coming to see Ippen in order to secure his bonds with the nembutsu, the lay-priest Tsuchimikado, former minister of the Imperial household, sent a verse:⁷ “Although I hear faintly/ a single call/ of the hototogisu,/ still I do not waken/ from my dozing dream.”⁸ In response:

*hototogisu
nanoru mo kiku mo
utatane no
yume utsutsu yori
hoka no hitokoe*

The call of the hototogisu
and the hearing of it
are both nodding dream:
beyond this sleep of dream and reality
is the solitary voicing.

In response to a poem from the abbot's quarters of Renkō-in temple: “There's nothing/ you should await expectantly,/ thinking it real:/ Did you truly see what was seen/ in yesterday's dream?”:

*utsutsu tote
machiete mireba
yume to naru
kinō ni kyō na
omoiawase so*

When you look, thinking real
what was hoped for and gained,
it turns into dream:
Permit no contrast in your mind—
today against yesterday.

⁶ Probably the letter translated in “The Record of Ippen: Letters,” p. 57.

⁷ See “The Record of Ippen: Letters,” p. 58.

⁸ The hototogisu (cuckoo), a bird of summer, was associated with the realm of the dead, perhaps because of its call, which resembles a human cry filled with loneliness and sorrow. In this poem the call also signifies the nembutsu.

Attached to a reply addressed to Bishop Kōgan:⁹

*Shumi no mine
takashi hikishi no
kumo kiete
tsuki no hikari ya
sora no tsuchikure*

On Sumeru's peak, the soaring
clouds, lowlying mists,
all disappear:
the very light of the moon
is a parcel of earth
in the vast empty sky.

*onozukara
ai-au toki mo
wakarete mo
hitori wa itsu mo
hitori narikeri*

When, in the way of things,
we meet
or we part,
each person invariably
remains
one alone.

*hisakata no
sora ni wa sora no
iro mo nashi
tsuki koso tsuki no
hikari narikere*

In all the heavens
there's no hue
of the empty sky:
But the moon
is indeed
the light of the moon.

*kaku shitsutsu
nohara no kusa no
kaze no ma ni
iku tabi tsuyu o
musubi kinuran*

Thus and again
between windsweep
and the rushing wind
over grass of the heath:
How many times now gathered into form,
down to
this bead of dew?

⁹ Perhaps the letter translated in "The Record of Ippen: Letters," pp. 60–61; *Hijiri-e* 6, however, simply gives this poem as "a reply to someone who asked about the teaching."

While snowbound at a place called Ōsaka:

tsumaba tsume
tomaranu toshi mo
furu yuki ni
kie nokoru beki
waga mi naraneba

Let it pile up
 as it pleases—
 snowfall through the years
 of unstaying time:
 Nothing of myself
 need remain when it's gone.

While he was spreading the teaching at Amagasaki in Settsu province, the lay-priest Tsuchimikado, former Minister of the Imperial household, sent a verse: "From the long night's/ sleep I have already/ wakened:/ Now a single call/ of the six-syllable Name is heard." In response:

nagaki yo mo
yume mo ato nashi
roku no ji o
nanoru bakari zo
ima no hitokoe

Of the long night and its dream
 there is no trace:
 Only the Name
 declaring itself—
 this solitary voicing now.

At Hōmanji, he had a Zen interview with Hottō Kokushi of Yura.¹⁰ Hottō posed the words, "The arising of a thought-instant is enlightenment," and Ippen responded:

tonaureba
hotoke mo ware mo
nakarikeri
namu-amida-butsu
no koe bakari shite

Say the Name
 and there is neither
 Buddha nor self:
 There is only the voicing
 of Namu-amida-butsu.

¹⁰ Hottō 法燈 Kokushi (teacher to the nation), also known as Shinchī Kakushin 心地覺心 (1207–1298), was an important Zen master with close associations with Mount Kōya and with the wandering monks (*hijiri*) of the day. The words posed by Hottō appear in *Mumonkan*, the koan collection by Wu-men Hui-k'ai (Mumon Ekai), from whom Hottō himself received the Zen transmission.

When Hottō heard this verse, he pronounced it “Not yet thoroughgoing,” so Ippen composed a second verse. With this, Hottō gave Ippen a handkerchief and a medicine basket as signs of recognition of his attainment (*inka*).

tonaureba
hotoke mo ware mo
nakarikeri
namu-amida-butsu
namu-amida-butsu

Say the Name
 and there is neither
 Buddha nor self:
 Namu-amida-butsu
 Namu-amida-butsu.

At a place called Kawabe on Ōshima Island, when ill and unable to eat or sleep normally:

omou koto
mina tsuki hatemu
ushi to mishi
yo oba sanagara
aki no hatsu kaze

All thought and attachment
 are utterly spent:
 Through the world I've seen
 to be filled with sadness,
 and now still so—
 the first winds of autumn.

kie yasuki
inochi wa mizu no
Awaji shima
yama no ha nagara
tsuki zo sabishiki

This life easily fading
 is but froth on the waters,
 at Awaji Island.
 Sinking
 to the ridge of hills:
 the solitary moon.

aruji naki
Mida no mi-na ni zo
umarekeru
tonaesutetaru
ato no hitokoe

You are born
 in the Name of Amida
 said without sayer:
 in the solitary voicing—
 all that remains
 of pronouncing and letting go.

*na ni kanau
kokoro wa nishi ni
utsusemi no
monuke hatetaru
koe zo suzushiki*

The heart in accord with the Name
has passed into the West—
Escaped
from the cast-off cicada's shell:
How cool and fresh the call!

At Kannon-dō in Hyogo, when the end was approaching:

*Amida Butsu wa
mayoi satori no
michi taete
tada na ni kanau
iki-botoke nari*

In Amida Buddha,
the paths of illusion and enlightenment
all fade away:
Just accord with his Name,
and he is a living, breathing Buddha.

Ippen, when young, received the following poem in a dream:¹¹

*yo o watari
somete takane no
sora no kumo
tayuru wa moto no
kokoro narikeri*

As I embarked on life
in the world, clouds
filling the sky about the peaks
suddenly broke:
and the mind
was pure, as from the first.

¹¹ According to *Hijiri-e* I, this verse came to Ippen shortly after the incident in which, on seeing a top that is spun in the air fall to the ground and lie still, he "realized for the first time the nature of birth-and-death and grasped the essence of the Buddha's teaching." See "The Record of Ippen: Letters," p. 51.