

POEMS BY THE LATE RIGHT REVEREND
SOYEN SHAKU, ABBOT OF
ENGAKUJI

(Translated by SEIREN)

1.

There is a truth which can ne'er be spoken ;
For words contain it not. Only from mind to mind
Can it communicate itself.
Yet, friend, know this that in your morning walk
You see and hear it :
It bloometh in the flower,
It singeth in the bird :
That truth which can ne'er be spoken,
Which passes from mind to mind.
See the flower !
Listen to the bird !
So shall you learn.

2.

When I stretch out my hand
To drink from mountain stream,
In the hollow of my palm
I see a gentle gleam.
What am I drinking then ?
I look above, below :
Is it water or the moon,
This soft but radiant glow ?

3.

I like to travel and to see new countries,
Although I've fled the world and all its care :
In boat, in carriage, or on dusty highway,
My heart is light, my home is everywhere.

4.

The radiant sun has fallen from the sight,
Has taken from the world his warming light :
But lo ! in that sweet flower blossoming there,
Has left a token, gleaming fair and bright.

5.

See that white cloud that floats in yonder sky :
And then can you the water well descry,
That underneath this shady bush is murmuring ?
They are the same : far cloud and water nigh.

6.

My bamboo hut is low and tiny :
I sit alone ; it is in spring ;
My flowers bloom in rare profusion ;
The breeze is soft the south winds bring.
But yester eve my friend had promised
To see my garden blooming fair :
I sit alone today, but listen
To gentle rain, and free from care.