

Wu Tzu poems



THE SUPREME MASTER CHING HAI

Wa Tzu Poems



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Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

Biography of The Supreme Master Ching Hai

*T*he Supreme Master Ching Hai was born in Central Au Lac (Vietnam). At the age of eighteen, Master Ching Hai moved to England to study, and then later to France and then Germany, where She worked for the Red Cross and married a German physician. After two years of happy marriage, with Her husband's blessings, She left Her marriage in pursuit of enlightenment, thus fulfilling an ideal that had been with Her since Her childhood. This began a time of arduous pilgrimages to many different countries that ended only when She met a perfect living Master in the Himalayas. Master Ching Hai received the divine transmission of the inner Light and Sound, which She later called the Quan Yin Method. After a period of diligent practice, She attained Perfect Enlightenment.



To satisfy the longing of sincere Truth seekers, the Supreme Master Ching Hai offers the Quan Yin Method of meditation to people of all nationalities, religions and cultural backgrounds. Her message of love and peace brings spiritual liberation and hope to people throughout the world, reminding all to uphold Truth, Virtue, and Beauty in life.

Part from setting a noble example, Supreme Master Ching Hai also encourages others to beautify the world through inspired creativity. Expressing Her inner joy through diverse media such as painting, poetry, jewelry and clothing designs, and musical compositions, Master Ching Hai seeks to enhance the outer as well as the inner beauty of all people with whom She comes in contact. Her artistic creations, displayed in exhibitions throughout the world, remind us of the inner spiritual realms. Her poems have served as a source of inspiration for many renowned composers, who have adapted the poems to music and performed the compositions to worldwide acclaim.

At a banquet honoring The Supreme Master Ching Hai in 1993, Mayor Frank F. Fasi of Honolulu, Hawaii, proclaimed: “The Supreme Master Ching Hai brings love to places around the world still plagued with hatred. She brings hope where there is despair, and She brings understanding where there is misunderstanding. She is the light of a great person, an angel of mercy for all of us.”

Foreword

The verses in *Wu Tzu Poems* were composed during a period spanning from the Author's initial spiritual quest through the time of Her attainment. "Wu Tzu," which may be translated as "No Death" or "Life Eternal," is The Supreme Master Ching Hai's pen name from that significant phase in Her life.

Originally written in Aulacese, all of the poems in this collection have been translated into English by The Supreme Master Ching Hai International Association (SMCHIA) Book Department, with guidance from the Author. To provide readers with a glimpse of The Supreme Master Ching Hai's genuine appreciation for the art of poetry, we have included an excerpt from the translated poem "The Saint" with editing comments by the Poet.

Wu Tzu Poems presents an intimate chronicle of the Poet's journey in search of the Truth. This undertaking was motivated by Her deep yearning to seek enlightenment for all beings, not just Herself, even at a time when Her life was regarded as highly successful by worldly standards.

Each poem marks a step on the passage toward spiritual awakening. But these verses reveal more than just a series of stages; they also reflect the devotion of a great Soul, and as such, touch the true Self or Soul in each of us.

We hope that readers who have felt a longing for Home will find a profound echo of their own sentiments within these pages.

The Saint

Originally in *Aulacese*: “Thánh Mẫu”

*In the glory of the summer sun You appear, and the sun seems to be dazed
You appear like a precious, refreshing stream! Your being, shines like the rays of countless jewels
But Your mighty power spans the Himalayas
The ocean-light from Your benevolent eyes an immense ocean...
Brightens the darkest corner of my soul!*

*Your smile gladdens my jaded soul heart
Kneeling down, I remember not any worldly language sense!
Looking up to Your majestic saintly being
I offer My tear-filled heart became a wholesome offering.*

*Whence comes Your precious manifestation?
Regal hands graciously bestow love in great abundance.
A mortal soul, lost and fragile
In a glimpse Suddenly, recalls her original Nature Self.*

Supreme Master Ching Hai is a consummate artist who deeply cherishes the beauty of poetic expression. Words in blue color reflect Her interpretive revisions and reveal the poem's more perfect meaning.

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I'd Rather Be a Plant

Originally in Aulacese: "Thà Làm Cò Cày"

*My heart aches, disaster everywhere to see
Tears fall with sorrow for a world in misery!
Why be born to a human fate?
I'd rather be a plant, in mountain and forest, carefree.*

München, Germany

Lunar New Year at the Red Cross Office

Originally in Aulacese: "Tết Ta Trong Sở Hồng Thập Tự"

New Year's Eve.

Three o'clock: Saying good-bye to the sun.

Four o'clock: Walking impassively to the car.

Evening comes, Heaven and Earth in dark slumber.

On New Year's Eve...

Dreaming of returning to my homeland – afar.

First day of the New Year.

Six o'clock: The alarm goes off.

Clambering to get up, skin as cold as copper!

Cup of coffee so bitter,

No sweet rice cake, only old bread – rock hard – !

Second day of the New Year.

*What's the point of New Year when work is so relentless?
Lonely purple blouses and rosa trousers
Curled up in a corn', missing their owner!
I yearn for the wonderful springtime in my sunny country.
In this foreign land, icy snow keeps falling indifferently.*

Third day of the New Year.

*Only one more night, and that's it!
Tomorrow the New Year will be sadly gone.
Well then, who'd need all this spring,
As if time had never changed, I imagine...!*

Schwabing, Bavaria



Sympathy

Originally in Aulacese: "Tlütöng Vay"

Passing by this way,

The view reminds me of you.

Snow drapes everywhere, the sky in gloom!

A hundred years concluded in one second.

Some people are gone, while others still remain.

Life is such a meaningless, poignant dream!



Master and Her husband on their wedding day
Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

The Labyrinth

Originally in Aulacese: "Mê Lō"

*When you came here, celestial dreams were forgotten –
Cherishing some earthly love for self-amusement.*

*Watching you is heartbreaking:
Once entering the labyrinth,
Who knows what lifetime you'll exit!*

Wildbad – Schwarzwald, Germany
May 1980

If You Are Going to the Land of Supreme Bliss

Originally in Aulacese: "Ai Vê Cít Lạc"

*For many springs I've hoped to become a renunciate
Years of the Tiger, Monkey, Snake and Pig* went by,
Still I hung around, playing housewife.
Assuring the Dragon and Cat, just to pass the time,
Promising the Rat and Goat, probably 'til I'm old and gray.
With the Ox and Horse, anger and ignorance were barely under control;
Then came the Dog and Rooster, greed and passion already erupted!
If you're packing to go to the Land of Supreme Bliss**
Won't you give me a ride to Amitabha Buddha's for a visit?*

München, Germany

*All the animals in this poem are a playful arrangement to present the twelve zodiac signs of Eastern astrology.

**Land of Supreme Bliss: A Buddhist term to denote the spiritual realm reigned by Amitabha (Infinite Light) Buddha

Abandoned Mansion

Originally in Aulacese: "Lâu Hoang"

*Once I came upon an empty mansion
The broken door: spiderwebs curtained
At the gate ajar, crickets chirped!
Through vacant rooms the wind sighed a sad tune
As if ancient spirits wandered about in mourning.
Mossy walls endured many misty nights and suns.
Here and there, a few cherry blossoms struggled to bloom!*

*Sun-burnt grass
Covered traces of a glorious past...*

Rapallo, Italy
Summer 1981



Master on a pilgrimage in Burma
Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

Like the Clouds High Above

Originally in Aulacese: "Mhut Aug Mây Cao"

O Buddha on the radiant dais high above,
I'm so lost, stumbling through the dark road!
I want to be devout, but it seems beyond my reach,
Wanting to be virtuous, yet always deep in blunders and mistakes.

Many times I tell myself to repent,
But binding ties beckon me toward the reincarnate existence.
My earthly garment tattered in the wind and lightning,
How I long to clutch a corner of Buddha's saintly raiment!

Once again, I drift aimlessly in the ocean of life
Bewildered, unsure of direction...
At night still dreaming of glory and achievement,
Only to awake and face the reality of broad daylight's frustration!

*Nightmares are heavy curtains obscuring my wisdom,
And calamities are swaying my faith.
Vulnerable, I gauge every staggering step,
Relying on the light of Buddha's teaching
To guide through the passageway of ignorance.*

*Many times I want to sever all attachments
But my heart clings to old karmic bindings.
Passion weaves its web, daily survival ties my limbs!
The harder the struggle, the deeper the entanglement...*

*© Buddha on the miraculous dais,
I'm so lost in countless worlds of misery.
I want to be noble, but why am I so lowly?
I long to be liberated, yet I'm still drowning...*

*Each passing day is dreary evermore
The sight of Buddha as elusive as the clouds high above!*

Rapallo, Italy
Summer 1981



Wishing

Originally in Aulacese: "Ước Nguyện"

*It seems the dew descended last night,
Leaving the lush garden a jeweled sight.
This morn delicate sunrays shiver in the wind,
Reminiscent of spring days gone quickly by.*

*It seems only yesterday, though decades have passed;
The body is weary from earthly journeys!
Fame and talents, half a lifetime preoccupied,
Then laid to rest in a square meter one day.*

*I want to dissolve into the gossamer mist,
Put away mundane burdens, shake off the dust...
So that I may journey to the Land of Light, visit the Buddha
And fulfill my longing from myriad eras.*

München, Germany
1981

A Visit to Dharma Flower Temple

Originally in Aulacese: "Viếng Chùa Pháp Hoa"

*Returning home, there's no joy within me.
Balancing worldly life and Zen, it's just sad and lonely.
Before being born into this material plane,
I've acquired unending debt from previous existence.*

*Visiting the temple, my heart is light in meditation
Returning home, my shoulders weigh heavy with desolation...*

Marseille, France

Returning from a Temple in Paris

Originally in Aulacese: "Kli Tít Chĩa Ò Paris Vê"

*Returning, I felt like a stranger in my own home
As if decades had passed and many seasons changed!*

*The backyard was covered with yellow leaves;
Slender grass swayed by the sparse fence.
Somber sky shed tender tears of rain.
Evening birds disappeared, withered branches indifferent.*

*I wandered by the bank of the stream
Feeling like Luu and Nguyen,* bewildered in this earthly realm!*

Germany

*Luu and Nguyen: Two characters in an ancient legend who serendipitously came upon Paradise. After a while they became nostalgic for their homeland. However, upon returning to Earth they found that their old familiar surroundings had changed completely. Sadly, they also had forgotten their way back to Paradise.



Master at Her parent-in-law's in Germany
Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

Awaiting Death

Originally in Aulacese: "Ta Chö Sij Chét"

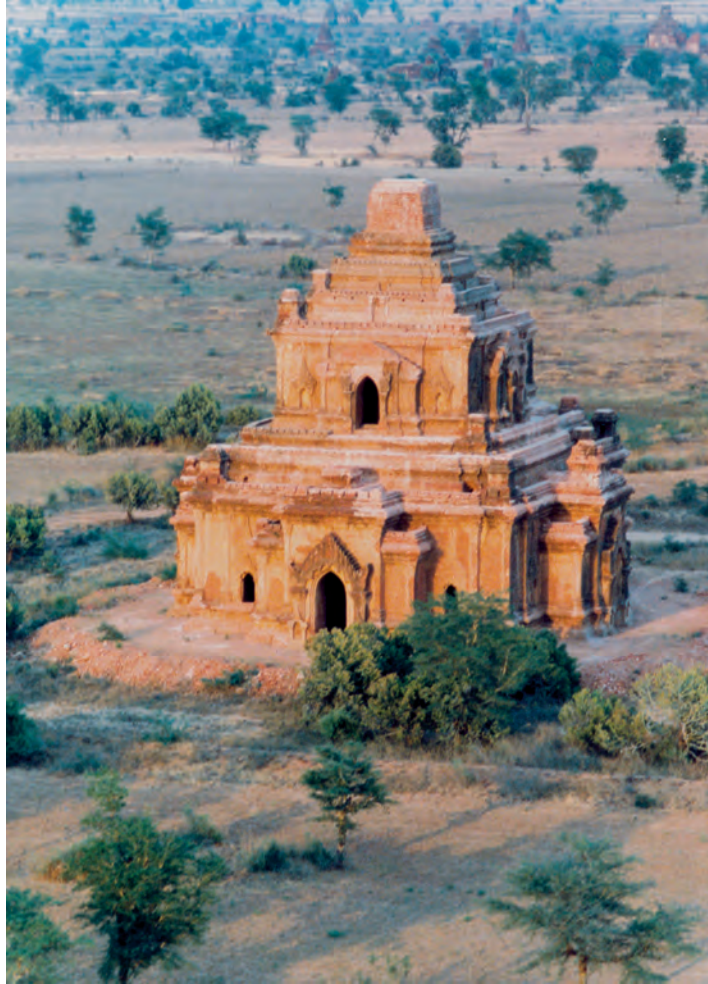
I wait for death each second of the day

Like an expectant mother waiting for the moment of delivery!

Why am I still young, yet to grow wiser?

Ever close to misery, so far from Nirvana...

Brannenburg, Germany
1981



Pagan, Burma

Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, Pagan

Originally in Aulacese: "Vạn Phật Thành Pagan"

*Sun shines brightly across the kingdom;
Once resplendent in glory, where to is it all gone?
Wild grass lonely and faded,
Thousands of ancient temples bow in grief.*

*A passing by traveler ponders,
By a sense of impermanence, deeply stirred!*

Pagan, Burma

Mandalay – Burma

Originally in Aulacese: “Mandalay – Mién Điện”

*At twilight, dust and sand swirl in the wind.
Imperial garden utterly abandoned,
Leaves drifting unceremoniously!
Where have magnificent citadels and palaces gone?
And royal maidens, splendidly adorned?*

*From the distant hill a temple bell peals
Resonating ethereal sounds in a world that seems unreal!*

On Memoriam

For the late venerable T. N. Trí Tánh

Originally in Aulacese: "Giữ Người Khuất Núi"

*In a foreign land, I met you some years ago.
Your nun's robe, the color of faded brown,
Both worldly life and renunciation uncertain.
Born with a headstrong personality,
In a female form, you endured controversy.*

*I read the old verse with nostalgia –
A cheerful line here, a line of grievance there.
Each polished sentence
Still quietly reflects your grace and elegance.*

*When you passed on, who cried and who rejoiced?
To whom could you explain the misjudgments and turmoil?
Pray to the Three Jewels* on the high abode
May the Awakened Soul be saved from the world of sorrow!*

*Beauty is often ill-fated;
A poet's hair turns gray before others'!
Alas! Alas!
At the Buddha's altar,
I lit a fragrant incense
In reverence
And prayed to Amitabha Buddha
To take the kindhearted to the Western Land** ...*

*Namo Buddha
Namo Dharma
Namo Sangha
Namo Quan Yin Bodhisattva Mahasattva!*

*Three Jewels: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha
(enlightened Master, Truth teachings, and Saintly assembly)

**Western Land (Paradise): A spiritual realm reigned by Amitabha Buddha

There Were Disappointing Times

Originally in Aulacese: "Có Những Lần Thất Vọng"

*Buddha has left the Earth!
Christ has ascended to Heaven!
Nowadays only humanity remains,
Somberly leading one other through the dark age...*

*Oh brothers and sisters!
Don't forsake this world,
Don't leave all sentient beings to suffer,
To join the joy in some distant Nirvana.
Stay here with me!
Please stay here with me!*

*We'll search high and low
For a little love,
For a little love!
To bestow on all beings
In all corners of existence!*

*I've been searching for so long,
But the future seems so uncertain.
I've been searching for so long,
But have yet to see the One!
Where are the Bodhisattvas?
In which direction are the Buddhas?*

*God's compassion, vast as the ocean and high as the sky,
Please shower upon us like sweet mountain rain
Onto this parched and broken life
To settle all injustices
And demolish all prisons!
The earthly dust has enshrouded the spirit
For many eons!*

*Eyes already blurred,
Wisdom blinded,
The way to the Heavenly palace forgotten.
In the six realms,* overflowed with demons,
And beings're writhing in bondage,
Shackled by the chains of the illusion.*

*Who will have sympathy?
Who will shower on us pity?
Christ and Buddha have shone the way
But the path is besieged with traps.
Who has the super power
To help sentient beings
Escape from the cycle of suffering?*

*Oh brothers and sisters!
Together with me
Please offer some deep prayers
For the peace and happiness of all creatures.
Life after life
We shall sacrifice
And pray that all beings
Cease to drown in ignorance.*

München, Germany
Early 1980s

*Six realms: A Buddhist term denoting the realms of existence in which we are still bound by the cycle of death and rebirth



A Lonesome Night

Originally in Aulacese: "Đêm Đòu"

Lonely like I've never been so lonely...

Sad like I've never been so sad...

Like a bird looking for a cozy nest,

Lost in the midst of a vast firmament!

My love, please come by and visit.

Hands extending, longer than the night,

Light my soul with your mysterious eyes

So life won't be a gloomy passage.

Oh beloved, sing for me lullabies of tender dreaminess,

Timeless songs of precious and innocent years.

Journey to the realm of legends together.

Let sadness ripen and fall into a river of rain.

Tonight only the muse and I remain;

Tomorrow is far away, the night still lingers.

I lie here, hiding my soul behind my flowing hair,

And listen as life's burdens fall upon my lonely shoulders.

Tired of Life

Originally in Aulacese: "Mệt Đời"

*I was born into a forsaken world
Here, no understanding of one another,
Passing by each other's lives like silent shadows.*

*We were born with empty hands
And shall depart with hands emptied!
Yet we grovel night and day
Torturing and troubling ourselves and others.*

*It's strange
Hard to imagine
We speak the same language
But cannot be understanding!
We're from the same source
But our lives are so isolated.*

*We have wisdom but don't know it
We have a soul but don't recognize
Day after night
As if living in darkness...*

*Oh, how tiresome is this!
What else can I say?
I just pray for peace every day
And the time of my departure won't be too far away!*



Master in Germany
Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

Lone Journey

Originally in Aulacese: "Độc Hành"

*Riding colossal waves
Flying through graying forests
Charging into the ferocious wind
Crossing the stormy sky!*

*But whereto shall I go?
All alone in the cosmos!
Eyes are dry of tears
Lips are void of cries.*

*Laughing out loud to pass the night
Piecing together the fragments of day.
Who will ascend the mountain
And cross the river with me?*

*A hundred years, please be brief!
Clouds, won't you carry me back to Heaven?
Where is my soul's companion?
A lone swallow lost on the horizon!*

*I smile to make you happy
I'm sad because you sob!
Pebbles and stones weigh in my dry heart
Yet I keep moving on in this desert of existence! ...*

*Not a word of comfort
Not a sign of solace.
God loves all beings
But neglects someone in a dark pit!*

*I long for day's end
To greet the night's arrival
Laughing and crying are identical,
Fulfillment or lacking, the same...*

*I will drink in full, this cup of sorrow,
Oh time, quickly pass, won't you!*



Supreme Master Ching Hai on the ferry near Herrenchiemsee, an island castle in Bavaria, Germany

*“The cicada was singing songs
All summer long,
But when the cold came blowing with the North wind
Found itself in great predicament...”**

Self-Counsel

*Originally in Aulacese:
“Khuyén Ta”*

*A human life is like floating clouds
Each day the body is wearing out
If we don’t practice spiritually now
When will we be free?*

*There will always be another body to replace this one
Plunging to hell or ascending to Heaven
Entering the deep ocean or staying in the wilderness
Becoming a ghost
Or wearing animals bodies!*

*If we live a full hundred years
We’ll just be submerged in worldly despairs.
Worrying about dinner while it’s still lunch
Day and night non-stop bustling!
Still can’t predict when death will loom near
This tiny self, toiling in Creation’s wheel of karma.*

Alas!

What sorrow!

I'm all out of tears

To cry for tortured sentient beings!

If anyone is going to Heaven

Please ask God:

Are You laughing or crying

Through life's upheavals and turbulence

Watching the suffering of Your children?!

Oh dear self!

Quickly find a living Master!

Hurry and practice, to escape the grueling system of the universe!

The cosmos' whim is too capricious

It's too late to regret once we've left this body!

“One needs to practice spiritually as if on fire

Life is so short, don't just wait forever.”

*From *Fables* by La Fontaine, a 17th Century French poet



Quan Yin Appears*

Originally in Aulacese: "Quán Âm Thị Hiện"

*From longings deep in my subconscious,
I wrote for you a poem
Simple as the flowers and foliage
Because I know not superficial norms.*

*All the exquisite languages in the world
Even if I write them all
Still cannot describe
This mysterious source of the worldly mind!
Unless I look into your eyes
To convey my unspoken reflections...*

*Oh, your eyes have occupied my heart
And your smile has blossomed in my being.
Where to hide, I know not,
From your omnipresence in the vast four oceans!
I don't know with whom to share
These naïve monologues.*

*Who are you,
And whence have you come?
Such magnificence like the almighty king of Heaven
With eyes starry bright!
And smile like tranquil pure nectar
Cleansing from my soul all traces of trouble.*

*I don't know where to search
I don't know what to do!
You come only in visions
Leaving my soul in endless pining!
Day and night come and go like the breath
From a Nan-Ke^{**} dream, I suddenly awake.
I wish we'd never seen each other
Then there would be none of this yearning..*

*Worldly love in the mundane realm
Is eternal bondage.
Be it sacred devotion or passionate amour
Everything's but the trick of Maya!
Wandering round and round in this ephemeral domain
Revolving within the six paths of reincarnation.*

*But what can I do with this heart?
A foolish thing that doesn't know how to discern!
And a wisdom that has been obscured since lifetimes past
So used to the binding prison.*

*Namo Quan Yin Bodhisattva
Nectar droplets from your sacred willow
Soothe the heart of this mortal,
Guiding me on this shore of oblivion
Your Heavenly light shines,
Leading me away from ignorance...*

*Quan Yin: Quan Yin Bodhisattva, also known as the Goddess of Compassion

**Nan-Ke: Based on Chinese legend, Nan-Ke refers to a beautiful but empty dream; it is also a metaphor for the illusory nature of worldly life, no matter how splendid.



Master on honeymoon, Rapallo, Italy

Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

I Love You

Originally in Aulacese: "Ta Thương Người"

*I love you as I love myself
Like my love for the five continents, great earth, mountains and rivers
Tomorrow's farewell, who will shed tears?
I bow to you in awe of your deep love!*

*Who knows when we'll ever meet again –
Sorrow for you with hair still lush
yet the color of amour has turned gray.*

*I'm leaving, aspired to reach Heaven high
Vowing to level out all upheavals in life!*

München, Germany

Bodhigaya Ashram, India

Originally in Aulacese: "Bồ Đề Đạo Tràng Ấn Độ"

*"The bodhi tree towers high above
Offering a cooling shade for thousands of worlds.
Utpala* flowers blooming constantly
Glorious and fragrant
Throughout all corners of creation."*

*A return to this place has satisfied my longing
The ashram of old permeated with sandalwood scent
Everywhere pious devotees
Honoring the benevolent Father of all beings.*

*Over two thousand years, the bodhi tree is still lush and green
Because the Buddha's spirit is eternally present
For humanity to worship and admire
The Enlightened One is as rare as an udumbara* blossom.*

*Following in His footsteps I seek to re-discover
My original Self and real image before birth.
Even if the mortal body breaks down,
Don't ever let the soul be shackled and bound.*

*Utpala, udumbara: Sacred flowers that blossom only once every three thousand years. These flowers figuratively refer to the rarity of finding an enlightened Master.



Master On a pilgrimage in Thailand
Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

*On Buddha's
Birthday
in His
Hometown*

*Originally in Aulacese:
"Khánh Đản Xứ Phật"*

*Visiting Buddha's homeland on His day of birth
Kneeling down, I caress the sand of the Ganges River,
Visualizing His footsteps centuries past
Fragrant still the scent of dharma from previous eras.*

*From the Supreme Source the holy stream flows
I taste the blessed nectar for my very soul
Letting all sorrows submerge to the river's depth
My withering heart is rejuvenated!*

*Existence or emptiness, I hardly comprehend
Opening my heart to the sacred current,
Letting it purify countless stored karmas
Innumerable fields of merits sprinkled anew with flowers.*

*Visiting Buddha's homeland on His day of birth
To search for His holy traces from thousands years past
With eyes closed, let the soaring soul
Reach the peak of the Vulture Mountain*
Seeing the Pure Land in the midst of an earthly sojourn!*

Rishikesh, India

*Vulture Mountain: Located in India and considered to be one of the Buddhist holy sites


Spring Rhymes

Originally in Aulacese: “Vân Xiân”

*Spring has come, who could imagine!
Time flies so fast, waiting for no one!
What to wish for humanity in the New Year?
The pen and paper are reluctant, verses hesitant...*

*Since I left home to search for the Tao
The luminous moon has waxed and waned
Thanks to a nightmare – from deep slumber awakened –
Now looking back, the world is still a dream!*

I wish to follow the Kitchen God to his realm
And view the world below like a chess game
To find out where the king and knights have gone
While helpless pawns noisily crowd the terrain.*



*Competing viciously for fame and profit
Defaming one other just for rank and power!
In sorrow, Saints hide in seclusion
While devils parade with utter arrogance...*

*The Maitreya Buddha's** great assembly is still far away,
The universe is shrouded in gloom as if the end of time
There is someone who sheds silent tears in long restless nights
Feeling compassion for the beings in this desperate plight!*

*Kitchen God: Eastern mythical figure believed to watch over the affairs of households. According to New Year tradition, the Kitchen God reports the deeds of household members at the end of each year.

**Maitreya Buddha: A great future Buddha, whose arrival is heralded by a holy gathering, or assembly, of spiritually elevated beings



Master in Greta, Greece
Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

The God Seeker

Originally in Aulacese: "Người Đi Tìm Phật"

*I've been searching for the Buddha everywhere
Casting aside riches and comfort,
Leaving behind my possessions and beloved!
Abandoning life like a roadside inn,
Are but a comedy show – success and fame!*

*I've been searching for the Buddha's return
But mountains are high and the seas vast,
Where can Thou be?
The world is in darkness and filled with misery
Innumerable beings thirst for Thee.*

*Namo Maitreya Muni
Have compassion for all sentient beings in darkness:
Divine halo enlightens the ignorant
Descending on Earth to save those languishing!*

Macleod Ganj, India



A Great Holy Master

Originally in Aulacese: "Đại Đạo Sư"

*One hair strand contains countless merits
One toe nail illuminates the entire Earth!
You descended to change the fate of the world
And fill the universe with tremendous love!*

*Here You are, the one I've been longing for:
Eyes like the vast ocean, compassionate and kind
Around you is light – sacred, brilliant,
Shepherding the lost sheep back to the Original Abode.*

*The whole universe bows to You in worship
I kneel down in silent awe
Ordinary eyes see not the majesty
Mortal mind knows not the highest Almighty!*

*Why am I chosen
To receive this miraculous gift
When the cosmos is still in a stupor?
Practiced for thousands of years, just for this hour:
To be near the omnipresent Beloved.*

*You're like a green palm tree in the desert
Protecting my soul with eternal cool shade.
All the treasures in the whole creation
Equal not the dust under Your holy footprints.*

*I weep silently, feeling sympathy for the worldlings
On the gloomy path they continue to tread!
You have come, yet no one knows
Your divine being exiled to this sorrow.*

*I want to soar with the clouds up high
Calling out Your name in the windy sky
Engraving Your name on glittering stars of the Milky Way
Waking the Earth with brilliant sunlight...*

*Come and listen to the Celestial Revelation!
Come and share with me in this blissful coronation!
Come and rejoice in the Jeweled Lotus and Heavenly Halo
The day all beings sing to celebrate this miracle.*

*The day the Great Holy Master, our benevolent Father,
Returns the cosmos to humanity!*

Rajburg, India



A Great Master

Originally in Aulacese: "Dai Si"

*Once I turned my back
Much affection still lingered!
Wonder why I always remember
Your name!
Like tonight in this remote foreign land
You're the North Star that shines on my pilgrim heart.*

*You're as noble as the pure moon
I know not where to find golden stars
To illuminate the earthly realm
To decorate the universe and invite you to the throne!*

*Only if I can be a grain of dust
Adorning your each and every lotus footprint!
This impure body contains but ignorance,
What can I earn in merits, worth an offering?*

*Are you from the Western Paradise,
Or did you from the South Sea appear?
You've made this poet abandon all her follies
On this impassioned journey!*

Himachal Pradesh, India

The Saint

Originally in Aulacese: "Thánh Nhân"

*You appear, and the sun seems to be dazed
Your being, shines like the rays of countless jewels
Your mighty power spans the Himalayas
The ocean-light from Your benevolent eyes.
Brightens the darkest corner of my soul!*

*Your smile gladdens my jaded heart
Kneeling down, I remember not any worldly sense!
Looking up to Your majestic saintly being
My tear-filled heart became a wholesome offering.*



*Whence comes Your precious manifestation?
Regal hands graciously bestow love in great abundance.
A mortal soul, lost and fragile
Suddenly, recalls her original Self.*

*Priceless words of dharma, serenely sweet
Oh joy! Such holy grace and words of compassion!
From this day with each step in silence
My mind will focus on the pilgrimage to Heaven!*

*Where we meet, You manifest in tranquil Light
More brilliant than all the stars in the sky.
No ocean or river can contain Your loving heart
And Your wisdom envelops the entire universe.*

*I return to my tiny abode
Into this confining body of the physical realm
Nirvana glimmers in the far distance;
My soul is awakened, filled with the Supreme.*

Dharmasala, India

Renunciation

Originally in Aulacese: "Xuât Già"

*For the SELF I sacrifice this self
For the SELF is one with all who in the cosmos dwelt!
Round and round in the realm of ignorance
Countless lifetimes, birth and death is of no importance!*

*The day I severed all ties to return to the Divine
In sympathy the Earth vowed to protect and the Heavens cried!
My soul rejoiced in the Bodhi wisdom
Inviting Buddhas to witness from ten directions.*

*From now on, all desires are severed
As young hair falls, Avichi* disappeared!*

Dharmasala, India

*Avichi: A Sanskrit term, meaning eternal hell



Descending from the Mountain

Originally in Aulacese: "Hā Sōi"

*The day I bid farewell to the mountains and forest green
The stream lamented, and pine trees ceased to sing!
Clouds and wind lingered wistfully
On the distant snow peak, rain drizzled a sad melody...*

*My heart was like an autumn leaf
Half reluctant to fall, half waiting to depart.
Farewell monastery, farewell friends, farewell my mentors
Farewell tiny abode, filled with blissful memoirs.*

*Returning to the world with mundane sojourn
Light-hearted still in a state of Zen-dream!*

Ingi Gompa, India



Advice for Spiritual Practice

Originally in Aulacese: "Khuyén Tú"

*A hundred years are but a series of struggles
Gold and brass are well-muddled,
It's difficult to know which is counterfeit!
Life is like the bubbles of an evening rain
If we don't practice spiritually now,
For what lifetime are we waiting?*

New York, USA

The Bodhisattva's Lotus

Originally in Aulacese: "Đóa Sen Bồ Tát"

*"In a pond, nothing is more beautiful than a lotus
Green leaves, white petals, with yellow pistils
Yellow pistils, white petals, and green leaves
Grown in the mud but reek not of it."**

*The Bodhisattva's life is filled with hardship
Sentient beings are hard to save, their minds difficult to gauge!
Incarnate into the ephemeral Earth
Borrowing a temporary body to help the world.*

*While this suffering realm still overflows with tears
The Saint's heart cannot be free and enjoy Nirvana!*

New York, USA
Fall 1984

*Aulacese folk poem



Master meditating on a pilgrimage in Thailand

Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

Existence and Nothingness

Originally in Aulacese: "Sắc Không"

*One step forward is to arrive at the Origin,
One inch back is to return to the suffering!
Year after year, it's just the same
Not much difference between this mundane Earth and home of the Saints...*

*I always thought Nirvana is so and so,
Had no idea I was wrong all along!
At the moment of enlightenment, where are the four elements?**
Alas, the cosmos is but a very long dream!

*Now I understand the Buddha's silence for forty years
Bodhidharma** also spoke not a word.
In the future, where do I turn for liberation?
Where are the sentient beings to be saved from reincarnation?*

New York Zen Center

*Four elements: Earth, water, air and fire are substances believed to constitute worldly existence. The fifth element in the Buddhist concept is the void or emptiness, a state attained by enlightened beings.

**Bodhidharma: The first Zen patriarch who at one point meditated while facing a wall for nine consecutive years



Master in Germany

Photo courtesy of Dr. Dr. Rudolf G.

A Reply to Thi-Hien of Berlin

Originally in Aulacese: "Đáp Thơ Thi Hiền Bá-Linh"

*From overseas I read your poem
Bemoaning the human fate as that of a silkworm.
My Jing-Ke* heart suddenly softened like velvet,
With loving care, I'd like to share a few words with a friend.*

*Since committing ourselves to the saintly path
We don't mind or dread obstacles!
Depth of the human heart is impossible to measure
Hence our spiritual method and noble ideals should be limitless.*

*Your white habit is like a precious, pure lotus
Dwelling in the mud, yet delightfully fragrant!
I don this brown robe due to a sacred vow
Compared to yours, my efforts might not be equivalent!*

*Because the Teachings manifest in innumerable shapes and forms
To save sentient beings we must live and work among them.
Thus a Bodhisattva has to endure, rain or shine,
Immersed in all the karma of this ephemeral life!*

*Although two individuals, you and I are truly one
Life after life we've been close friends.
Upholding the same pledge to sacrifice for the noble Truth
Even in distance, we're not separated ever.*

*The path we've been on countless lifetimes
Has no beginning, no end, no boundaries.
Supporting each other on our journeys, we feel not weary
As long as people's tears still fill the vast blue sea!*

Taipei, Formosa
1983

*Jing-Ke: A valiant knight in ancient China. A Jing-Ke heart denotes courage and sacrifice for a good cause.

The Ego

Originally in Aulacese: "Cái Ta"

What is the ego, really?

Scampering around in ridiculous pell-mell!

The ego is bigger than thousands of people

Even the vast cosmos couldn't contain!

Notorious for passion, greed, and anger

Haughty and self-aggrandizing,

Competing for might and power.

Then in one fleeting moment

Oh where to go, hundreds of paths – all so dark!

Taipei, Formosa
1983

A Dreaming Buddhist

Originally in Aulacese: "Thích-Từ Liêm Mò"

*You went in search of the magic potion
To save the eternal Soul.
You went to see the Medicine Buddha in the East,
Visiting Amitabha Buddha in the West,
Beseeching the Buddhas in the three realms
And Bodhisattvas in the ten directions!*

*They all shook their heads in pity:
"My child, to solve this matter, not easy;
The world has been so for eternity!"*

*Lao Tzu smoothed his beard and smiled:
"My brother! An ordinary mind is the Tao.
No need to make such a ruckus, rushing about.
You'll only bring trouble and despair to yourself!
Heaven and Earth since time immemorial
Have always been tranquil!"*

Lin San Pagoda, Formosa
1984

Seeing Dharma Teacher in a Dream

Originally in Aulacese: "Trong Mơng Gặp Thầy"

*Dear Teacher, last night I saw you in a dream.
You were so much thinner than before, it seemed!
Brown robe faded through seasons of sun and rain
Standing by the terrace awaiting my return...*

*Since taking leave, busy seeking the Truth
But I never forgot:
"Without a teacher, not many can succeed!"
Engraved in my heart your deep love and care.*

*From this island, misty with tears
I respectfully weave these verses as an offering;
Thousands of miles away, yet I still carry within
Your grace, as vast as the ocean and the mountains immense.*

*Even in death, I can never repay!
But due to a solemn vow to save other beings,
I travel still through the five continents
Sowing the seeds of wisdom and goodness in all directions.*

*Hoping that with infinite merits
I can honor the Four Benefactors* above,
While bestowing blessings upon the three worlds of suffering** below,
And to repay in a tiny fraction the kindness of my former Master
For guiding me through a difficult beginning!*

Formosa
Season of Tranquility 1985

*Four Benefactors: Buddhist term referring to obligation and appreciation toward one's parents, one's nation, other sentient beings, and the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, Sangha)

**Three worlds of suffering: Buddhist term denoting hell, the world of hungry ghosts, and the world of animals

Peaceful Abode

Originally in Aulacese: "An Trú"

*A*midst nature's scenery
Green woods and red hills
I and myself
One figure and lone shadow
Coming and going, as if there's none else.

A tiny cozy hermitage
Birds chirping merrily all through the day
An exotic parrot
White as cotton
Perching on the smooth green bamboo branch.

*Honeyed plums and persimmons fill the forest
Red ripened peaches and pomegranates cover the hillside
Glistening golden oranges
Vibrant alpine flowers permeating fragrance
Aroma of longan fruits wafting in the wind
Reeds swaying in a celestial dance
Butterflies fluttering, bees buzzing in cheery chant!*

*Brown rice
Clean water
Salt and sesame powder,
Peaceful mind
What is paradise!*

*Am I in the land of Heavenly angels
Or the Western Paradise?
Where is Amitabha Buddha?
Only blissful light day and night,
My spirit aglow
Tranquil.*

*The first summer raindrops clear as crystals
Bathing the earth and sky in Pure Nectar.*

Yang Ming Mountain Hermitage, Formosa
Summer Retreat 1983

Wu Tzu Poems

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