

Exhortations from Master Rinzai

Followers of the Way,
people everywhere say that there is a Way to be practiced,
a Dharma to be proven.
Tell me, what Dharma will you prove,
What Way will you practice?
What is lacking in your present activity?
What still needs to be patched up?

**

I say to you there is no Buddha, no Dharma,
nothing to practice, nothing to prove.
Just what are you seeking thus in the highways and byways?
Blind men! You're putting a head on top of the one you already have.
What do you yourself lack!
Followers of the Way,
your own present activities do not differ
from those of the patriarch-Buddhas.
You just don't believe this and keep seeking outside.
Make no mistake!
Outside there is no dharma;
inside, there is none to be obtained.
Better than grasp at the words from my mouth,
take it easy and do nothing.

This physical body of yours composed of the four elements
can neither expound the Dharma nor listen to it;
your spleen and stomach, liver and gallbladder
can neither expound the Dharma nor listen to it;
the empty sky can neither expound the Dharma nor listen to it.

Then just what can expound the Dharma and listen to it?
This very you standing distinctly before me without any form,
shining alone—this can expound the Dharma and listen to it!
Understand it this way, and you are not different from the Patriarch Buddha.

Followers of the Way,
it is urgently necessary that you endeavor to acquire true insight
and stride boldly under heaven so as not to lose your senses
due to a bunch of spirits. He who has nothing to do is the noble man.
Simply don't strive—just be ordinary.

Just make yourself master of every situation,
and wherever you stand is the true place.

--selected passages from the Ruth Fuller Sasaki translation
of *Rinzai Roku*.