

# Chanting notes

## Chantsheet symbols:

- ◎ Larger bell
- Smaller bell
- 🔇 Clampdown of bell

## Pronunciation Guide:

### 1 x mora sound examples:

- A = ah [as in 'father']
- I = ee [as in 'meet']
- U = oo [as in 'loom']
- E = eh [shorter sound than in 'day']
- O = oh [as in over]

- GA = hard as in 'garden'
- GE = geh as in 'game'
- TSU = similar to ts in 'cats', 'pets'
- JU = soft as in 'jewel'
- SU = soo eg 'soot'
- N = n / m

### 2 x mora sound examples:

- Ō = long oh
- Ū = long oo
- EI = long ay as in 'bay'
- TSŪ = tsoo [long oo at end]
- TEI = te-i if said slowly or if quickly te
- AI = a-i if said slowly or if quickly ai [eg aye]
- UE = oo-eh
- IE = ee-eh
- II = eeee
- IYA = ee-ya
- NEN = neh-n if slowly or nen if quickly

Macron: the line above the letter, eg. Ō, indicates that the sound is longer.

**BOLD:** used in the larger or faster chants especially, to show the sound is longer and distinguish from other sounds eg. **MYŌ** or **SEN** in the Sandōkai.

Range of 1 x mora Japanese sounds, in Roumaji (Roman letters):

A	I	U	E	O
KA	KI	KU	KE	KO
SA	SHI	SU	SE	SO
TA	CHI	TSU	TE	TO
NA	NI	NU	NE	NO
HA	HI	FU	HE	HO
MA	MI	MU	ME	MO
YA		YU		YO
RA	RI	RU	RE	RO
WA				O
N				
GA	GI	GU	GE	GO
ZA	JI	ZU	ZE	ZO
DA	JI	ZU	DE	DO
BA	BI	BU	BE	BO
PA	PI	PU	PE	PO
KYA		KYU		KYO
GYA		GYU		GYO
SHA		SHU		SHO
JA		JU		JO
CHA		CHU		CHO
NYA		NYU		NYO
HYA		HYU		HYO
BYA		BYU		BYO
MYA		MYU		MYO
PYA		PYU		PYO
RYA		RYU		RYO

無 上 甚 深 微 妙 法

◎ MŪ JŌ JIN JIN MĪ MYŌ HŌ

百 千 万 劫 難 遭 遇

HYAKU SEN MAN GŌ NAN SŌ GŪ

我 今 見 聞 得 受 持

GĀ KON KEN MON TOKU JŪ JĪ

願 解 如 來 真 實 義

GAN GĒ NYŌ -RAI SHIN JITSU GĪ *(gassho and bow)*

Translation:

unsurpassed, profound, wondrous Dharma  
is rarely encountered, even in a hundred, thousand, million kalpas  
now that we see and hear it, pick it up, accept and uphold it,  
may we unfold the truth of the Tathāgata's teachings

Takkesage 搭袈裟偈  
Draping on the Okesa Verse

*-repeat three times*

大 哉 解 脱 服  
DA - I SA - I GE DAP - PUKU

無 相 福 田 衣  
MU **SŌ** FU KU DE -N E

披 奉 如 来 教  
HI BU NYO RA - I **KYŌ**

広 度 諸 衆 生  
**KŌ** DO SHO SHU **JŌ**

Literal translation:

how great this garment of letting go  
formless lucky field clothing  
unfolding humbly the Tathagata's teachings  
widely to all beings

Soto translation:

Great robe of liberation  
Virtuous field far beyond form and emptiness  
Wearing the Tathagata's teaching  
I vow to save all beings

Shi gu sei gan mon 四弘誓願文 Four Universal Vows

四 弘 誓 願 文

◎ SHI GU SEI GAN MON *(one person)*

衆 生 無 邊 誓 願 度

◎ SHU-JŌ MU-HEN SEI-GAN DO *(everyone, once or repeat three times, slow)*

煩 惱 無 尽 誓 願 斷

◎ BON-NŌ MU-JIN SEI-GAN DAN

法 門 無 量 誓 願 學

◎ HŌ-MON MU-RYŌ SEI-GAN GAKU

仏 道 無 上 誓 願 成

◎ BUTSU-DŌ MU-JŌ SEI-GAN JŌ

English Soto chant:

◎ Beings are numberless; I vow to free them

◎ Delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them

◎ Dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter them

◎ The Buddha Way is unsurpassable; I vow to realize it

Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyō 延命十句觀音經  
Boundless (lit. Life Extending) Ten Phrase Kannon Sūtra

-repeat three times  
-each sound same length roughly

觀 世 音 ◎ KAN ZE ON	Kanzeon! ( <i>Avalokiteshvara</i> )
南 無 佛 NA MU BUTSU	at one with Buddha
與 佛 有 因 YO BUTSU U IN	with Buddhas there are causes
與 佛 有 緣 YO BUTSU U EN	with Buddhas there are effects
佛 法 僧 緣 BUP-PO SŌ EN	Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha - conditions
常 樂 我 淨 JŌ RAKU GA JŌ	eternal, joyful, self, purity ( <i>qualities of Nirvana</i> )
朝 念 觀 世 音 CHŌ NEN KAN ZE ON	morning heart-mind is Kanzeon
暮 念 觀 世 音 BO NEN KAN ZE ON	evening heart-mind is Kanzeon
念 念 從 心 起 NEN NEN JŪ SHIN KI	this very moment arises from heart-mind
念 念 不 離 心 NEN NEN FU RI SHIN	this very moment not separate from heart-mind

Alternative translation:

Kanzeon! homage to the Buddha!  
in cause and effect related to all buddhas  
and to buddha dharma and sangha  
eternally joyful and self purified  
morning chanting Kanzeon with nen (care/attention)  
evening chanting Kanzeon with nen  
all experience universal expression  
experience not separate from boundless heart-mind

Fuekō

普回向

Universal turning of merit

*godō 後堂 (rear hall position):*

願わく は 此の 功德 を  
NEGAWAKU WA KONO KUDOKU O

以て 普く 一切 に 及ぼし  
MOTTE AMANEKU ISSAI NI OYOBOSHI

我等 と 衆生 と 皆 共 に  
WARERA TO SHŪJŌ TO MINA TOMO NI

仏道 を 成ぜん こと を  
BUTSUDŌ O JŌZEN KOTO O - -

*everyone:*

十 方 三 世 一 切 佛  
◎ **JI HŌ SAN SHI I SHI FU**

諸 尊 菩 薩 摩 訶 薩  
◎ **SHI SON BU SA MO KO SA**

摩 訶 般 若 波 羅 蜜  
◎ **MO KO HO JA HO RO MI**

Translation:

*rear hall position:*

may this merit equally extend  
to every being and place,  
so that we together with all beings  
may realize the Buddha way

*everyone:*

ten directions, three worlds, all Buddhas  
all honoured ones, Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas  
Great Perfect Wisdom (Mahā Prajñā Pāramitā)

讚 佛 偈

SAM BUTSU GE

〇〇

(導師)  
dōshi

(同音)  
dōon

1. 光顏巍巍 威神無極  
KŌ GEN GI GI I JIN MU GOKU
- 如是炎明 無与等者  
NYO ZE EN MYŌ MU YO TŌ SHA
2. 日月摩尼 珠光炎耀  
NICHIGATSU MA NI SHUKŌ EN NYŌ
- 皆悉隱蔽 猶若聚墨  
KAI SHITSU ON PEI YU NYAKUJU MOKU
3. 如來容顏 超世無倫  
NYO RAI YŌ GEN CHŌ SE MURIN
- 正覺大音 響流十方  
SHŌ GAKU DAI ON KŌ RU JIP - PŌ
4. 戒聞精進 三昧智慧  
KAI MON SHŌ JIN SAN MAI CHI E
- 威德無侶 殊勝希有  
I TOKU MURYO SHUSHŌ KE U
5. 深諦善念 諸佛法海  
JIN TAI ZEN NEN SHOBUTSU HŌ KAI
- 窮深尽奧 究其崖底  
GU JIN JIN NŌ KUGO GAI TAI
6. 無明欲怒 世尊永無  
MUMYŌ YOKUNU SE SON YŌ MU
- 人雄師子 神德無量  
NIN NO SHISHI JINTOKU MURYŌ
7. 功勳廣大 智慧深妙  
KUKUN KŌ DAI CHI E JIN MYŌ
- 光明威相 震動大千  
KŌ MYŌ I SŌ SHINDŌ DAISEN
8. 願我作佛 齊聖法王  
GAN GA SA BUTSU SAISHŌ HŌ Ō
- 過度生死 靡不解脫  
KADO SHŌ JI MIFU GE DATSU
9. 布施調意 戒忍精進  
FU SE JŌ I KAININ SHŌ JIN
- 如是三昧 智慧為上  
NYO ZE SAN MAI CHI E I JŌ
10. 吾誓得佛 普行此願  
GO SEI TOKU BUTSU FUGYŌ SHIGAN
- 一切恐懼 為作大安  
IS - SAI KUKU ISADAI AN

11. 假使有佛 百千億萬  
KESHI UBUTSU HYAKUSENNOKUMAN
- 無量大聖 數如恒沙  
MURYŌ DAISHŌ SHUNYO GŌ JA
12. 供養一切 斯等諸佛  
KUYŌ IS - SAI SHITŌ SHOBUTSU
- 不如求道 堅正不却  
FUNYO GUDŌ KENSHŌ FUKYAKU
13. 譬如恒沙 諸佛世界  
HINYO GŌ JASHOBUTSU SEKAI
- 復不可計 無數刹土  
BUFUKAKE MUSHUSETSU DO
14. 光明悉照 徧此諸國  
KŌMYŌ SHISHŌ HENSHISHOKOKU
- 如是精進 威神難量  
NYO ZESHŌ JIN I JIN NAN RYŌ
15. 令我作佛 國土第一  
RYŌ GASA BUTSU KOKUDO DAI ICHI
- 其衆奇妙 道場超絕  
GOSHUKIMYŌ DŌJŌ CHŌZETSU
16. 國如泥洹 而無等雙  
KOKUNYONAI ON NI MUTO SŌ
- 我當哀愍 度脫一切  
GATŌ AIMIN DODATSUIS - SAI
17. 十方來生 心悅清淨  
JIP - PŌ RAI SHŌ SHINNETSU SHŌ JŌ
- 已到我國 快樂安穩  
ITŌ GAKOKU KE RAKUANNON
18. 幸佛信明 是我真証  
KŌBUTSU SHINMYŌ ZEGA SHINSHŌ
- 發願於彼 力精所欲  
HOTSGANNOHI RIKISHŌ SHUYOKU
19. 十方世尊 智慧無碍  
JIP - PŌ SE SON CHE MU GE
- 常令此尊 知我心行  
JŌ RYŌ SHISON CHIGA SHINGYŌ
20. 假令身止 諸苦毒中  
KERYŌ SHINSHI SHOKUDOKUCHŪ
- (緩唱)  
kanshō
- 我行精進 忍終不悔  
GAGYŌ SHŌ JIN NINJUFUKE

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## Sambutsuge

### Verses in Praise of the Buddha

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 Your radiant countenance is majestic,<br>And your dignity is boundless.<br>Radiant splendour such as yours<br>Has no equal.  | 2 Even the blazing light of<br>The sun, moon and manji-jewels<br>Is completely hidden and obscured,<br>And looks like a mass of black ink-sticks.  |
| 3 The countenance of the Tathagata<br>Is unequalled in the world;<br>The great voice of the Perfectly Enlightened<br>One<br>Resounds throughout the ten quarters.                | 4 Your observance of precepts, learning and<br>diligence,<br>Meditation and wisdom-<br>The magnificence of these virtues is peerless,<br>Excellent and unsurpassed.                        |
| 5 Deeply and clearly mindful<br>Of the ocean of the Dharma of all Buddhas,<br>You know its depth and breath,<br>And reach its farthest end.                                      | 6 Ignorance, greed, and anger<br>Are completely absent in the World-honoured<br>One;<br>You are a lion, the most courageous if all<br>humans,<br>Having immeasurable virtues.              |
| 7 Your meritorious accomplishment is vast,<br>And your wisdom is deep and supreme;<br>The majestic glory of your light<br>Shakes the great thousand worlds.                      | 8 I vow to become a Buddha,<br>Equal to you, the most honoured King of the<br>Dharma,<br>And to bring sentient beings from birth-and-<br>death<br>To the final attainment of emancipation. |
| 9 My practice of giving, self-discipline,<br>Observance of precepts, forbearance, diligence,<br>And also meditation and wisdom<br>Shall be unsurpassed.                          | 10 I resolve that, when I become a Buddha,<br>I will fulfil this vow in every possible way,<br>And to all beings who live in fear<br>I will give great peace.                              |
| 11 Even though there are Buddhas<br>As many as a thousand million kotis,<br>Or countless great sages<br>As many as the sands of the Ganges,                                      | 12 I will make offerings<br>To all these Buddhas;<br>Nothing surpasses my determination<br>To seek the Way steadfastly and untiringly.   |
| 13 Even though there are Buddha-worlds<br>As many as the sands of the Ganges,<br>And as innumerable lands<br>Beyond calculation.   | 14 My light shall illumine<br>All of these lands;<br>I will make such efforts<br>That my divine power may be boundless.  |
| 15 When I become a Buddha,<br>My land shall be the most exquisite;<br>People there shall be unrivalled and excellent<br>And my seat of enlightenment shall be beyond<br>compare. | 16 My land shall be like nirvana,<br>Being supreme and unequalled.<br>Out of compassion and pity,<br>I will bring all to emancipation.   |
| 17 Those who come from the ten quarters<br>Shall rejoice with pure hearts;<br>Once they reach my land,<br>They shall dwell in peace and happiness.                               | 18 May you, the Buddha, be my witness<br>And attest to the truthfulness of my resolution.<br>I have thus made my aspiration;<br>I will endeavour to fulfil it.                             |
| 19 The World-honoured Ones in the ten quarters<br>Have unimpeded wisdom;<br>May these honoured ones<br>Always know my intentions.  | 20 Even if I should be subject to<br>All kinds of suffering and torment,<br>Continuing my practice undeterred,<br>I would endure it and never have any regrets.                            |

短念佛 廻向  
TAN - NEMBUTSU EKŌ

(導師)  
(dōshi)

(同音)  
(dōon)

南無阿彌陀佛 南無阿彌陀佛  
NA MAN DA BU NA MAN DA BU

南無阿彌陀佛 南無阿彌陀佛  
NA MAN DA BU NA MAN DA BU

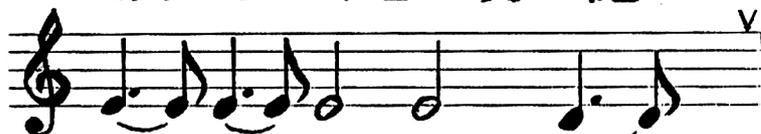
南無阿彌陀佛 南無阿彌陀佛  
NA MAN DA BU NA MAN DA BU

(導師)  
(dōshi)



GA-N NI SHI KU DO KU  
願 以 此 功 德

(同音)  
(dōon)



BYO-U DO-U SE I - S - SA - I  
平 等 施 一 切



DO-U HO-TSU BO DA - I SHI-N  
同 發 菩 提 心



. O - U JO - U - A - - - N RAK-KO - KU  
往 生 安 樂 國

## Shin Eko

Having now received the teaching of this sutra  
Which contains and conveys the innumerable virtues  
Of Amida, the Buddha of Universal Reality,  
The Buddha of my reality,  
The Buddha whose Pure Land is our timeless home,  
I vow to open to all beings everywhere,  
Equally,  
This joyous assurance of enlightenment,  
The life-opening affirmation of wisdom and compassion  
Which unconditionally embraces myself and all others,  
None to be rejected,  
None abandoned,  
By the dynamic, transforming power of Amida's Vow.

(version by Ruth Tabrah)

## Kaikyōge

This verse is chanted in many schools such as Jodo, Nichiren, and Soto. It is chanted or read usually at the beginning of: a chanting session, sutra copying, Dharma talk or a study group. It is followed by gassho with a bow.

The first line is from chapter two 'Expedient means' of the Lotus Sutra. The wondrous dharma can never be fully encountered (nan sō gū) or grasped intellectually so we need trust, and it is picked up (toku) and expressed in practice now (kon) in zazen and in the true reality (shin jitsu) of our life experience and all experience.

## Takkesage

The verse for draping on the Okesa (kasaya – dull colour) robe, or the smaller portable robes such as Rakusu. Chanted usually in the morning at the end of the zazen period (slowly), repeated three times. At some groups practitioners will keep their Rakusu folded during the first zazen and place on their head during the chanting (so that it is higher physically than their body) then put it on.

The robe of 'freedom' – gedatsu – can mean the robe of freedom from suffering or illusions – and therefore the robe (puku) of meditation practice which is the way to nirvana. Datsu means undressing or getting rid of – letting go of ego attachments and greed. In zazen we let go of being tightly gripped by distraction and return to open our awareness. The okesa design is based on rice field paddy shapes, and was pieced together by Buddha's disciples from used rags. In it are teachings of impermanence and 'form or emptiness', 'non material reward' or 'no forms/marks' (musō). With practice and the expression of all things together we cultivate the 'lucky/virtuous field', and the harvest is enlightenment rather than physical reward.

Wearing it we are wrapped (hibu) in the Tathāgata's teachings (nyorai kyō), but by draping it on, freedom is not only for the wearer but spreads the robe out widely (kōdo) to embrace all other beings (sho shujō).

## Shiguseiganmon

The Four Universal Vows are the great vows ('pledge and wish' – sei gan) for Mahayana practitioners, and mostly relate to the four noble truths: the truth of suffering; the truth of the causes of suffering; the truth of how to end suffering - Nirvana; the truth of the way that leads to Nirvana.

The second vow 'delusions are inexhaustible; I vow to end them' corresponds to the second truth to help people understand the causes of suffering such as hindrances, troubles, ignorance, attachment and aversion.

The third vow 'dharma gates are boundless; I vow to enter them' relates to last noble truth of the way to nirvana and so to practice, so the dharma gates include the eightfold path such as right mindfulness and meditation.

The last vow 'the Buddha Way is unsurpassable; I vow to realize it' is to wish to realize the Buddha's awakening (bodhi), so relates to the third truth.

Taking these four vows as bodhisattvas we vow to practice endlessly to help all beings while still suffering ourselves.

## Enmei Jukku Kannon Gyō

The ten phrase sutra of Avalokiteshvara's boundlessly extending compassion. It may be a Tendai sutra made as a summary of Chapter 25 of the Lotus Sutra. This is about the Buddhist practice and experience of zazen and interconnectedness, moment by moment all things expressing themselves, and

the bodhisattva's efforts to cultivate karuna such as embodied by Kannon's desire to remove harm and suffering.

Rinzai master Hakuin encouraged people to chant it daily telling them it would help bring well-being or protect life, so it is seen as a very positive chant. Some see it as having a powerful force and others as an inspiration on how to practice wholeheartedly. In the chant itself it encourages to chant this in the morning and in the evening, beginning and ending our day with Kannon. It is also chanted during Takuhatsu begging.

For different Mahayana schools this chant has varied meanings, it is often devotional towards Kannon (literally means: perceiver/seeing and hearing of sounds/noise/cries, also known as Kanzeon: hearing the worlds's sounds), and is thought to encourage refuge in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (Three Jewels), and to have care for all things.

## Sambutsuge

Sambutsuge (Verses in Praise of the Buddha) appears in the first volume of the 'Sutra on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life'.

In this gatha, Bodhisattva Dharmakara, who became Amida Buddha in the beginningless past, praises the Dharma and majestic appearance of his teacher, Buddha Lokeshvararaja. Bodhisattva Dharmakara expresses his desire to become a Buddha overflowing with wisdom and compassion.

He vows that he will save all beings who are suffering in the world of delusion, enabling them to cross over to the other shore, even if it would mean sinking into the poisonous swamp of suffering and pain himself.

## Fueko and other Eko

Verses which literally turn around (ekō) the merits gained by us from chanting a particular chant or chants, so it is chanted afterwards to pass the merits to all beings. The Fuekō is a universal ekō, and there are other various specific ekō's that follow certain chants.

## About the Shin Eko (by Ruth Tabrah)

After a traditional chanting of this sutra, the four syllables Na Man Da Bu are repeated six times, followed by an Eko.

Eko is the Mahayana (but not the Shin) practice of transferring any merit accruing from this sutra chanting. Since Shinran abandoned this concept of the necessity of acquiring merit, and the virtue of such chanting as a means to the end of attaining Buddhahood, strictly speaking the Mahayana Eko is not compatible with Shin Buddhism.

However, the tradition of chanting Eko has persisted for centuries in Shin temples. For Rennyō Shōnin, under whose guidance Shinshū flourished in medieval Japan, the chanting of the sutra represented one's yearning to be reborn in Amida's Pure Land. The sonorous repetition of NaManDaBu represented being so reborn and the eko expressed the Shinshū concept of genso bodhisattva, returning to this world to work for the enlightenment and welfare of all.

(The translation) is a new century version of Eko, in Shin terms, acknowledging the power of the Vow and its effect on one's life.