

## **Mountains and Waters Sutra** (short version)

Mountains and waters right now are the actualization of the ancient Buddha way. Each, abiding in its phenomenal expression, realizes completeness. Because mountains and waters have been active since before the Empty Eon, they are alive at this moment. Because they have been the self since before form arose they are emancipation-realization.

Priest Daokai of Mt. Furong said to the assembly, "The green mountains are always walking; a stone woman gives birth to a child at night." Mountains lack none of their proper virtues. Therefore they always abide in ease and always walk. We must devote ourselves to a detailed study of this virtue of walking. Mountains' walking is just like humans walking. Accordingly, do not doubt that the mountains walk simply because they may not appear to stride like humans. The Buddha ancestors' words point to walking. This is fundamental understanding. You should penetrate these words.

To doubt the walking of the mountains means that one does not yet know one's own walking. It is not that one does not walk but that one does not yet know, has not made clear, this walking. Those who would know their own walking must also know the walking of the blue mountains.

Do not slander mountains by saying that the blue mountains cannot walk, nor the East Mountain move over the water. It is because of the baseness of the common person's point of view that we doubt the phrase "the blue mountains walk"; because of the crudeness of our limited experience, we are surprised by the words "flowing mountain". Without having fully penetrated even the term "flowing water", we just remain sunk in our limited perception.

Even when we have the eyes [to see mountains as] the appearance of grass and trees, earth and stone, fences and walls, this is nothing to doubt, nothing to be moved by: it is not the complete appearance [of the mountains]. Even when there appears an occasion in which [the mountains] are seen as the splendor of the seven treasures, this is still not the real refuge. Even when they appear to us as the realm of the practice of the way of the buddhas, this is not necessarily something to be desired. Even when we attain the crowning appearance of the vision of [the mountains as] the inconceivable virtues of the buddhas, their reality is more than this. Each of these appearances is the particular

objective and subjective result [of past karma]; they are not the karma of the way of the buddhas and ancestors but narrow, one-sided views.

It is not only that there is water in the world, but there is a world in water. It is not just in water. There is also a world of sentient beings in clouds. There is a world of sentient beings in the air. There is a world of sentient beings in fire. There is a world of sentient beings on earth. There is a world of sentient beings in the phenomenal world. There is a world of sentient beings in a blade of grass. There is a world of sentient beings in one staff. Wherever there is a world of sentient beings, there is a world of Buddha ancestors. You should thoroughly examine the meaning of this.

Although we say that mountains belong to the country, actually they belong to those who love them. When the mountains love their owners, the wise and virtuous inevitably enter the mountains. And when sages and wise persons live in the mountains, because the mountains belong to them, trees and rocks flourish and abound, and the birds and beasts take on a supernatural excellence. This is because the sages and wise persons have covered them with their virtue. We should realize that the mountains actually take delight in wise people, actually take delight in sages.

There are mountains hidden in treasures. There are mountains hidden in swamps. There are mountains hidden in the sky. There are mountains hidden in mountains. There are mountains hidden in hiddenness. This is complete understanding.

An ancient Buddha said, "Mountains are mountains, waters are waters." These words do not mean mountains are mountains; they mean mountains are mountains. Therefore investigate mountains thoroughly. When you investigate mountains thoroughly, this is the work of the mountains.

Such mountains and waters of themselves become wise persons and sages.