

本来無一物

Honrai mu ichimotsu

*Originally not a single thing exists*

These are the words of the Sixth Ancestor, Rokuso Enō, written when he was training under Master Goso Gunin. Gunin's chosen successor, Jinshu Joza, had offered this poem:

Our body is a bodhi tree,  
Our mind a mirror bright.  
Carefully wipe them all the time  
And let no dust alight.

When Enō heard these lines he wrote another poem in response:

There is no bodhi tree,  
Nor stand of a mirror bright.  
Originally not a single thing exists,  
Where can dust alight?

Our mind may be likened to a mirror, but any idea that there is such a thing as a mirror is already a mistake. From the origin there is not a single thing. Our original state of mind has not a single mind moment. To become enlightened to that is satori. With this body we manifest Mind, but that which is manifested is without form or substance. This is where we all are equal. If we don't have this fresh awareness, letting go of each thought as it arises, we lose track of the Truth. That is what the Sixth Ancestor meant when he said, "Originally not a single thing exists."