**Poetry Stones #4–6**

**#4**

The fourth monument is located just west of Gallery Neiha, next to an old lamppost. It is inscribed with a poem reflecting on the nature of daily practice:

*mamoru tomo*

*omowazu nagara*

*oyamada no*

*itazura naranu*

*kakashi narikeri*

Though limp at its post

the useless-seeming scarecrow

does not realize

how important it is to

the small mountain rice paddy

**Explanation**:

The scarecrow is simply doing what it has always done, and it may not feel like it is really accomplishing anything. But by watching over the fields, the scarecrow is fulfilling its own important role. The same is true of us in our day-to-day lives.

**#5**

The fifth monument can be found in Eiheiji’s pocket park, a small grassy area with benches and a friendly looking statue of Ksitigarbha, a bodhisattva known as a protector of children:

*kono kyō no*

*kokoro o ureba*

*yononaka no*

*uri kau koe mo*

*hō o toku kana*

If you understand

the Lotus Sutra’s essence

even the sounds of

the bustling marketplace

will seem to preach the dharma

**Explanation**:

This poem serves as an important reminder that one does not need to become a monk to practice the teachings of the Buddha. Even a layperson can recite and understand the meaning of sutras while working hard in their chosen occupation.

**#6**

Continuing in the direction of Eiheiji Temple, visitors will find the sixth monument alongside the street across from the pocket park:

*itazura ni*

*sugosu tsukihi wa*

*ōkeredo*

*michi o motomuru*

*toki zo sukunaki*

How many they are

the days and months spent idly

doing this or that

and yet how ever scarcer

our time spent seeking the Way

**Explanation**:

In a world filled with desires and distractions, it can be difficult to devote oneself to Zen practice. It is crucial to make a wholehearted effort every single day, regardless of how hectic life may feel.