

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 Eihei-ji'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.