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# Sesshin poem

**By Marc Van Der Maat, a stupid monk, Brussels (Belgium)**

Silence drawing  
gracefully  
another  
silence

On the altar  
the incense  
climbs  
gracefully  
in spirals to the stars

The rustle  
of a kesa  
stepping  
behind  
sitting buddha's

With the sangha  
the godo  
enters  
a new day

In the kitchen  
the tenzo  
attentively  
stirs  
the guen maï  
pot

In the dining hall  
the chairs  
observe  
attentively as well  
noble silence

Different voices  
with  
different  
individual timbres

but

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ONE sangha  
ONE harmony  
ONE heart sutra

Gyatei gyatei  
Hara gyatei ...

Clear and joyful  
the little bell  
opens the way  
on a soft carpet of  
colourful leaves  
and  
chestnuts' sharp husks

like magnificent spring flowers  
expanding and opened wide  
in the middle of autumn  
to delicately perfume  
the Dharma

Godo and tenzo  
offer the incense  
in the dining hall

Buddha's little statue  
with serenity  
looks through  
our steaming hearts

and

in this manner  
stimulates  
our hunger for  
the practice

samu here  
samu there  
sweeping here  
sweeping there  
here and now here  
and even so over there  
everybody sweeping, sweeping  
cleaning, ranging, rincing and purifying  
all personal and collectif mess  
all rubbish, active and non-active old junk

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what a spectacle, it's a magnificent miracle  
one over here and another over there  
naturally, spontaneously  
all personal and collectif waste is  
recycled into dharmic compost

samu here  
samu there  
samu everywhere

great silence  
in the dojo hall

outside  
the chestnuts fall  
loudly on the soil of  
the Hanen forest  
and some even try to pass inside,  
gliding through the doorway  
widely open to the sun  
as far as little Buddha's statue  
on the altar

they follow the Dharma  
without caring about what  
is coming ahead

“ Become like the falling chestnuts, “  
says the master during kusen,  
“ detached, body and mind abandoned,  
Shin jin datsu raku. “

The sun goes down and the stars  
appear high in the sky  
trees and chestnuts keep silent now  
and also listen with benevolence  
during a few moments

in the dojo is  
great noble silence

last afternoon  
sun, and shining faces

the whole universe  
rejoice with the sangha

the bells jingle  
the wood resonates

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the drum thunders and  
the big bowl quivers of happiness

Jukāi  
after the vows  
the new bodhisattva  
is warmly welcomed into  
the holy sangha

all the Buddha's, all the Masters  
and Patriarches join us :  
Sanpāi !

Everything has been cleaned  
the cars are loaded  
a last laughter, a last hug,  
and bye-bye  
in our civilian clothes  
we again dive in an  
over-activated agitated world

just leaving our autumn wood  
cars are loudly tootening and  
rushing too near our nicely folded kesa's  
that roaring bikers scarcely  
can't besmear

the smell of the incense and the choko  
in our kesa's perfumes the asphalt,  
the steel and concrete in the city desert  
and in our cemented hearts

our new sesshin starts right here  
and right now, in this very instant  
in the middle of this pandemonium  
of humanoid beings fabricated  
by the latest updated high-tech

to be  
simply  
to be, just being  
like the chestnuts in the wood ...