

正法眼藏第六十三
Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma
Book 63

發菩提心
Bringing Forth the Mind of Bodhi
Hotsu bodai shin

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INTRODUCTION

This fascicle of the *Shōbōgenzō* was composed in the spring of 1244, at the monastery of Kippōji 吉峰寺, in the province of Echizen (present-day Fukui prefecture). It appears as number 63 in the 75-fascicle redaction of the *Shōbōgenzō*. The work is perhaps more often known as *Hotsu mujō shin* 發無上心 (“bringing forth the mind of the supreme [awakening]”), the title supplied in the 60-fascicle *Shōbōgenzō*, where it occurs as number 53. This text is not to be confused with another essay bearing the title *Hotsu bodai shin* that is found in the 12-fascicle collection of the *Shōbōgenzō*: although the colophons of the two works give the same time and place of composition, there is no overlap in their content.

The term *hotsu bodai shin* refers to the aspiration of the bodhisattva to attain the supreme awakening of a buddha. In his treatment of this theme, Dōgen expands the sense of the term in two directions. On the one hand, from the very outset, he identifies the bodhisattva’s aspiration with “trees and rocks,” with “the whole earth,” with the mind that is the reality of all things. On the other hand, he associates this aspiration with the concrete acts of Buddhist piety and practice—from offering alms, reciting a buddha’s name, and sponsoring temple building, to entering the clerical order, practicing meditation, and preaching the dharma. Dōgen describes such acts as “unconditioned” and “unproduced,” and strongly criticizes those Buddhists who dismiss them as merely good deeds generating merit for the agent. Fashioning an icon or erecting a stupa, he says, is itself “making a buddha and practicing buddhahood.”

The celebration here of the common acts of Buddhist ritual practice seems something of a departure from a teaching Dōgen elsewhere attributes to his Chinese teacher, Tiantong Rujing 天童如淨: that offering incense, bowing, invoking the buddhas, practicing repentance, and reading scriptures are all unnecessary in the study of Zen. Some interpreters have suggested that the message of the *Hotsu bodai shin* was intended especially for the lay supporters of Dōgen’s new temple, Daibutsuji 大佛寺, the ground breaking ceremony for which took place only five days after the composition of the work.

This translation is based on the edition of the text in Kawamura Kōdō, *Dōgen zenji zenshū* 道元禪師全集, volume 2 (1993), pp. 160-168. A slightly variant version of the translation appears in *Dharma Eye*, No. 21 (Spring 2008). Other English renderings of this work can be found in Kōsen Nishiyama and John Stevens, “Developing the Supreme Mind,” *Shōbōgenzō*, volume 2 (1977), pp. 121-125; Yuho Yokoi, “Awakening to the Highest Supreme Mind,” *The Shobo-genzo*

(1986), pp. 715-725; Thomas Cleary, “Awakening the Unsurpassed Mind,” *Rational Zen: The Mind of Dōgen Zenji* (1992), pp. 95-103; Gudo Nishijima and Chodo Cross, “Establishment of the Will to the Supreme,” *Master Dogen’s Shobogenzo*, Book 3 (1997), pp. 253-263; and Hubert Nearman, “On Giving Rise to the Unsurpassed Mind,” *The Treasure House of the Eye of the True Teaching* (2007), pp. 765-773. The translator expresses his debt to the members of the 2008 Seminar in Japanese Buddhist Texts, with whom he read the text at Stanford.