

TREASURY OF THE TRUE DHARMA EYE

NUMBER 5

This Mind Itself Is the Buddha

Soku shin ze butsu

即心是佛

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INTRODUCTION

This relatively short work occurs as number 5 in both the sixty- and seventy-five-chapter compilations of the *Shōbōgenzō* and as number 6 in the Honzan edition. It was written at Kōshōji in the summer of 1239, some three years after the founding of the monastery and near the beginning of its author's serious work on the *kana Shōbōgenzō*. The doctrinal theme of the text stands out from Dōgen's other work dated to 1239 ("Jūundō shiki" 重雲堂式, "Senjō" 洗淨, "Senmen" 洗面), all of which tend to focus on monastic practice.

The title phrase, "this mind itself is the buddha" (or "this very mind is the buddha"), is a well-known saying in Zen literature, usually associated with the famous eighth-century master Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一. Dōgen opens his essay with a lament that so many Zen students misunderstand the saying, thinking that "the mind" here refers to the consciousness present in all forms of awareness. Such a view, he identifies as the non-Buddhist understanding of the brahman Śreṇika, who argues in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* for a self that migrates from body to body.

For his part, Dōgen prefers a Zen saying that the mind is "the mountains, rivers, and the whole earth; the sun, moon, and stars." Yet, lest we think that he is talking simply of a cosmic buddha consciousness, he reminds us that the mind of the buddhas is also the mind of undefiled aspiration, practice, and verification of bodhi. Finally, in a rather surprising turn, he ends by collapsing all the buddhas into Buddha Śākyamuni, who is "this mind itself is the buddha."

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Treasury of the True Dharma Eye
Number 5

即心是佛

This Mind Itself Is the Buddha

[05:1] {1:53}

佛佛祖祖、いまだまぬかれず保任しきたれるは、即心是佛のみなり。しかあるを、西天には即心是佛なし、震旦にはじめてきけり。學者おほくあやまるによりて、將錯就錯せず。將錯就錯せざるゆえに、おほく外道に零落す。

What buddha after buddha and ancestor after ancestor have maintained without fail is just “*this mind itself is the buddha*.”¹ However, “*this mind itself is the buddha*” did not exist in Sindh in the West; it was first heard in Cīnasthāna.² Since many students misunderstand it, they do not *make a mistake of a mistake*; and because they do not *make a mistake of a mistake*, many drop into other paths.³

[05:2]

いはゆる即心の話をききて、癡人おもはくは、衆生の慮知念覺の未發菩提心なるを、すなはち佛とすとおもへり。これはかつて正師にあはざるによりてなり。

1 “**this mind itself is the buddha**” (*soku shin ze butsu* 即心是佛): Or “this very mind is the buddha.” A very common phrase in Chan literature, associated especially with Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (709-788); See Supplementary Notes.

2 “**this mind itself is the buddha**” did not exist in Sindh in the West; it was first heard in Cīnasthāna (*Saiten ni wa soku shin ze butsu nashi, Shintan ni hajimete kikeri* 西天には即心是佛なし、震旦にはじめてきけり): Dōgen uses here a Chinese transliteration (*Shintan* 震旦) of a Sanskrit term for China. The claim seems to be that it was the Chinese who first gave voice to what the buddhas and ancestors of India had “maintained” (*hōnin* 保任) without expressing. While the particular phrase, “this mind itself is the buddha,” does seem first to occur in China, there is Indian precedent for the equation of the mind and the buddha; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “This mind itself is the buddha.”

3 **make a mistake of a mistake** (*shōshaku jushaku* 將錯就錯): An idiom, found in Zen texts, meaning “to recognize one’s mistake as such,” “to turn a mistake to one’s advantage,” or “to one mistake after another”; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Make a mistake of a mistake.”

other paths (*gedō* 外道): I.e., [the views of] non-Buddhist religions.

Hearing the words “this mind itself,” the foolish think that the thinking and perceiving of living beings, not yet having brought forth the mind of bodhi, is taken as “the buddha.”⁴ This is because they have never met a true master.

[05:3]

外道のたぐひとなるといふは、西天竺國に外道あり、先尼となづく。かれが見處のいはくは、大道はわれらがいまの身にあり、そのていたらくは、たやすくしりぬべし。いはゆる、苦樂をわきまへ、冷煖を自知し、痛癢を了知す。萬物にさへられず、諸境にかかはれず。物は去來し、境は生滅すれども、靈知はつねにありて不變なり。この靈知、ひろく周遍せり。凡聖含靈の隔異なし。そのなかに、しばらく妄法の空華ありといへども、一念相應の智慧あらはれぬれば、物も亡じ、境も滅しぬれば、靈知本性ひとり了了として鎮常なり。たとひ身相は破れぬれども、靈知はやぶれずしていつるなり。たとへば人舍の失火にやくるに、舍主いでてさるがごとし。昭昭靈靈としてある、これを覺者・智者の性といふ。これをほとけともいひ、さとりと稱す。自他おなじく具足し、迷悟ともに通達せり。萬法・諸境ともかくもあれ、靈知は境ともならず、物とおなじからず、歷劫に常住なり。いま現在せる諸境も、靈知の所在によらば、眞實といひぬべし。本性より縁起せるゆえには實法なり。たとひしかありとも、靈知のごとくに常住ならず、存没するがゆえに。明暗にかかはれず、靈知するがゆえに。これを靈知といふ。また眞我と稱し、覺元といひ、本性と稱し、本體と稱す。かくのごとくの本性をさとるを、常住にかへりぬるといひ、歸眞の居士といふ。これよりのちは、さらに生死に流轉せず、不生不滅の性海に證入するなり。このほかは眞實にあらず。この性あらはさざるほど、三界・六道は競起する、といふなり。これすなはち先尼外道が見なり。

To say that they join other paths refers to one such follower of an other path in the Land of Sindhu in the West whose name was Śreṇika.⁵ His viewpoint was that the great way is in our present body, and that its true state is easily knowable.⁶ It distinguishes pleasure and pain, knows of

4 **thinking and perceiving** (*ryo chi nen kaku* 慮知念覺): A loose translation of terms for cognitive functions not commonly found as a set in Buddhist literature but appearing several times in the *Shōbōgenzō*, where they seem to stand collectively for the ordinary operations of consciousness. The translation takes them as two compound expressions (the first of which does occur elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō* in reference to the thinking mind); as individual terms, they might be rendered “considering, knowing, thinking, and perceiving.” See Supplementary Notes.

not yet having brought forth the mind of bodhi (*mihotsu bodai shin* 未發菩提心): I.e., without the bodhisattva's aspiration for buddhahood, or “thought of bodhi” (*bodai shin* 菩提心; S. *bodhi-citta*); see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Bring forth the mind.”

5 **Śreṇika** (*Senni* 先尼): Tentative reconstruction of the Chinese *Xianni* 先尼, the name of a brahman appearing in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* (*Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經, T.374.12:594a14-596b10), who argues for a transcendental self that transmigrates from body to body.

6 **the great way is in our present body** (*daidō wa warera ga ima no mi ni ari* 大道はわれらがいまの身にあり): The term *daidō* 大道 (rendered here “great way”) may also

itself cold and heat, recognizes pains and itches. It is unimpeded by the myriad phenomena and unassociated with its objects. Although things come and go, and its objects arise and cease, the spiritual knowing always exists and is unchanging.⁷ This spiritual knowing extends everywhere; there is no division among commoners, sages, and all the animate.⁸ Within it, there may temporarily be the sky flowers of false dharmas, but when the wisdom of a single thought's correspondence appears, when things die out and its objects cease, the original nature of spiritual knowing alone is clear and constant.⁹ Though the corporeal form may break down, the spiritual knowing departs intact. It is just as the owner of a house departs when the house is destroyed by fire.¹⁰ Its existence is

(and, here, perhaps better) be understood as “great awakening,” taking the glyph *dō* 道 in its use for Sanskrit *bodhi*).

7 **spiritual knowing** (*reichi* 靈知): Or, perhaps, “numinous awareness.” The term is not used in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* account of Śreṇika's views but is quite common in Chinese Buddhist texts, including those of Chan, where it typically denotes sentience, or the awareness present in every conscious mental state.

8 **commoners, sages, and all the animate** (*bonshō ganrei* 凡聖含靈): An expression, occurring several times in the *Shōbōgenzō*, for all sentient beings, including ordinary humans and advanced Buddhist adepts; best known from a line of verse by the ninth-century lay figure Zhang Zhuo 張拙 (dates unknown), quoted in “*Shōbōgenzō kūge*” 正法眼藏空華:

光明寂照遍河沙。凡聖含靈共我家。

The radiance shines silent through [worlds like] the Ganges sands;

Commoners, sages, all the animate, together are my family.

“The animate” renders *ganrei* 含靈 (“beings endowed with spirit”), a translation that loses the syntactic continuity here with *reichi* 靈知 (“spiritual knowing”).

9 **sky flowers of false dharmas** (*mōbō no kūge* 妄法の空華): I.e., illusions. “Sky flowers” (*kūge* 空華) is a standard Buddhist expression for spots appearing as a result of visual impairment; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Clouded eyes and sky flowers.” Note, however, that below Dōgen reports that the objects (*shokyō* 諸境) of spiritual knowing are held to be real (*shinjitsu* 眞實), insofar as they are said to arise from that knowing.

the wisdom of a single thought's correspondence (*ichinen sōō no chie* 一念相應の智慧): A fixed expression for a state in which one is (a) cognizant of the truth and/or (b) in full accord with one's true nature.

10 **the original nature of spiritual knowing** (*reichi honshō* 靈知本性): In his description of Śreṇika's view, Dōgen seems to be treating “original nature” (*honshō* 本性) as synonymous with “spiritual knowing” (*reichi* 靈知). The former term was sometimes used in China to render the Sanskrit *prakṛti*, a term of art in Sāṃkhya philosophy for the primordial substance from which the world evolves; but, in that philosophy, the world is merely the unconscious object of experience, distinct from the transcendental subject (*S. puruṣa*).

11 **just as the owner of a house departs when the house is destroyed by fire** (*tatoeba ninsha no shikka ni yakuru ni, shashu idete saru ga gotoshi* たとへば人舎の失火にやくるに、舎主いでてさるがごとし): A simile drawn from Śreṇika's account of his position in the sūtra (*Da banniepan jing* 大般涅槃經, T.374.12:594a28-b1).

luminous and spiritual, and it is said to be “the nature of the awakened and the wise.” It is spoken of as “buddha” and called “awakening.” It endows equally self and other; it penetrates both delusion and awakening. The myriad dharmas and various objects be as they may, the spiritual knowing does not accompany its objects, is not the same as things; it constantly abides across the kalpas. The objects existing in the present, based on the presence of the spiritual knowing, should also be spoken of as real: because they arise conditionally from the original nature, they are real dharmas. Nevertheless, they are not constantly abiding like the spiritual knowing, for they exist and vanish. It is unrelated to light and darkness, because it knows spiritually. This is called “spiritual knowing.”¹¹ Again it is designated “the true self”; it is called “the source of awakening”; it is designated “the original nature”; it is designated “the original substance.” One who awakens to this kind of original nature is said to have “returned to constant abiding” and is called a “great one returned to the true.” Thereafter, without further drifting about in birth and death, one enters verification of the ocean of the nature that neither arises nor ceases. Anything other than this is not the true. It is said that, to the extent that this nature has not been manifested, the three realms and six paths arise in profusion.¹² This, then, is the view of the other path of Śreṇika.

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[05:4] {1:54}

大唐國大證國師慧忠和尚問僧、從何方來。僧曰、南方來。師曰、南方有何知識。僧曰、知識頗多。師曰、如何示人。僧曰、彼方知識、直下示學人即心是佛。佛是覺義、汝今悉具見聞覺知之性。此性善能揚眉瞬目、去來運用。徧於身中、捏頭頭知、捏脚脚知、故名正遍知。離此之外、更無別佛。此身即有生滅、心性無始以來、未曾生滅。身生滅者、如龍換骨、似蛇脫皮人出故宅。即身是無常、其性常也。南方所說大約如此。師曰、若然者、與彼先尼外道、無有差別。彼云、我此身中有一神性、此性能知痛癢、身壞之時、神即出去。如舍被燒舍主出去。舍即無常、舍主常矣。審如此者、邪正莫辨、孰爲是乎。吾比遊方、多見此色。近尤盛矣。聚却三五百衆、目視雲漢云、是南方宗旨。把他壇經改換、添糝鄙譚、削除聖意、惑亂後徒、豈成言教。苦哉、吾宗喪矣。若以見聞覺知、是爲佛性者、淨名不應云法離見聞覺知、若行見聞覺知、是則見聞覺知非求法也。

11 It is unrelated to light and darkness, because it knows spiritually. This is called “spiritual knowing.” (*meian ni kakawarezu, reichi suru ga yue ni. Kore o reichi to iu* 明暗にかかはれず、靈知するがゆえに。これを靈知といふ): The translation here follows Kawamura’s punctuation. The passage might better be parsed, “Because, unrelated to light and darkness, it knows spiritually, this is called ‘spiritual knowing.’”

12 three realms and six paths (*sangai rokudō* 三界・六道): The three levels of existence and the six stations of rebirth in *samsāra*; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Three realms,” and “Six paths.”

Reverend Huizhong, National Teacher Dazheng, of the Land of the Great Tang, asked a monk, “Where have you come from?”¹³

The monk said, “I came from the south.”

The Master said, “What wise friends are there in the south?”¹⁴

The monk said, “There is a great number of wise friends.”

The Master asked, “How do they instruct people?”

The monk said, “The wise friends there instruct their students straight away that this mind itself is the buddha. [They say,]

“Buddha” means “awakened.” You are all already endowed with a nature that sees, hears, perceives, and knows.¹⁵ This nature enables you to raise your eyebrows and blink your eyes, to come and go and make use of things.¹⁶ It pervades your body: when you poke your head, your head knows it; when you poke your foot, your foot knows it. Therefore, it is called “correct pervasive knowing.”¹⁷ Apart from this, there is no other buddha. This body is subject to arising and ceasing, but since the beginningless past, the nature of the mind has never arisen or ceased. The arising and ceasing of the body are like the dragon changing its

13 **Reverend Huizhong, National Teacher Dazheng, of the Land of the Great Tang** (*Daitō koku Daishō kokushi Echū oshō* 大唐國大證國師慧忠和尚): I.e., Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠 (d. 775), disciple of the Sixth Ancestor and the subject of a number of famous kōans. The conversation quoted here occurs in the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄, T.2076.51:437c17-438a6.

14 **“What wise friends are there in the south?”** (*nanpō u ka chishiki* 南方有何知識): “Wise friends” (*chishiki* 知識) is a standard term for a Buddhist teacher. Dazheng lived in the north, at the capital, Chang’an.

15 **“Buddha” means “awakened.” You are all already endowed with a nature that sees, hears, perceives, and knows** (*butsu ze kaku gi, nyo kon shitsu gu ken mon kaku chi shi shō* 佛是覺義、汝今悉具見聞覺知之性). The translation obscures the recurrence of the term *kaku* 覺 here, rendered first as “awakened” and then as “perceives.” The expression “sees, hears, perceives, and knows” (*ken mon kaku chi* 見聞覺知) is a standard fixed set, standing for the operations of the six consciousnesses.

16 **raise your eyebrows and blink your eyes** (*yōbi shunmoku* 揚眉瞬目): A set phrase used in Chan texts to represent the ordinary actions of human life, often, as here, seen as expressions of the buddha nature; occurs several times in the *Shōbōgenzō*. See Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Raise the eyebrows and blink the eyes.”

17 **Therefore, it is called “correct pervasive knowing”** (*ko myō shōhenchi* 故名正遍知): The translation seeks to preserve the word play in the original, which here provides its teaching of the pervasiveness of consciousness throughout the body as an etymology for the term *shōhenchi* 正遍知, one Chinese rendering of the buddhas’ epithet “perfectly awakened one” (S. *samyak-sambuddha*).

bones, resemble the snake shedding its skin or the person leaving an old house.¹⁸ That body is impermanent, while the nature is permanent.

“What they say in the south is roughly like this.”

The Master said, “If this is so, then there’s no difference from that other path of Śrenika. They say, “Within this body of mine, there is a spirit nature.¹⁹ This nature knows pain and itching. When the body disintegrates, the spirit departs, like the owner of a house departs when the house burns. The house is impermanent, but the owner is permanent.”

When we examine it, something like this fails to distinguish between true and false. Who would take it as right? When I was wandering about some time ago, I often encountered this type. These days, they’re particularly flourishing. They gather assemblies of three to five hundred and, gazing up at the Milky Way, tell them, “This is the message of the South.”²⁰ They revise the *Platform Sūtra*, mixing in vulgar tales and erasing the sage’s intent, misguiding and confusing later followers.²¹ How could it represent the oral instruction?²² How painful that our tradition is so ruined! If we take seeing, hearing, perceiving, and knowing as the buddha nature, *Vimalakīrti* would not have said, “The dharma is apart from seeing, hearing, perceiving, and knowing.”²³ If we’re engaged in seeing, hearing,

18 **like the dragon changing its bones** (*nyo ryū kan kotsu* 如龍換骨): Based on the belief that a dragon “changes” its bones as it outgrows them.

19 **“Within this body of mine, there is a spirit nature”** (*ga shi shin chū u ichi shinshō* 我此身中有一神性): Judging from its description here, we can probably take the term “spirit” (*shin* 神) here as more or less synonymous with the “spiritual knowing” (*reichi* 靈知) used by Dōgen above.

20 **gazing up at the Milky Way** (*mokushi unkan* 目視雲漢): A fixed expression, typically for an idle or vacant state.

“This is the message of the South” (*ze nanpō shūshi* 是南方宗旨): Likely here a reference, not merely to southern China, but to the so-called Southern school, whose members claimed descent from Huizhong’s master, the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng 慧能.

21 **the Platform Sūtra** (*Dankyō* 壇經): I.e., the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Ancestor* (*Liuzu tan jing* 六祖壇經, T.2007) the text purporting to record the teachings of Huineng. The work, originating in the second half of the eighth century, underwent much revision over the centuries. In his “Shōbōgenzō shizen biku” 正法眼藏四禪比丘, Dōgen also dismisses the text current in his time as not the teachings of the Sixth Ancestor.

erasing the sage’s intent (*sakujo shōi* 削除聖意): I.e., eliminating the Sixth Ancestor’s teachings.

22 **How could it represent the oral instruction?** (*ki jō gonkyō* 豈成言教): Presumably, here again, the authentic teachings of the Sixth Ancestor.

23 **Vimalakīrti** (*Jōmyō* 淨名): From Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* (*Yuima kyō* 維摩經, T.475.14:546a23-25). The first sentence of the quotation here is a variant of the extant sūtra version..

perceiving, and knowing, this is seeing, hearing, perceiving, and knowing; it is not seeking the dharma.”

[05:5] {1:56}

大證國師は、曹溪古佛の上足なり、天上・人間の大善知識なり。國師のしめす宗旨をあきらめて、參學の龜鑑とすべし。先尼外道が見處、しりてしたがつことなかれ。

National Teacher Dacheng was a superior disciple of the Old Buddha of Caoxi; he was a great wise friend both in the heavens and among humans.²⁴ We should clarify the essential point presented by the National Teacher and make it the model for our study.²⁵ Knowing it as the viewpoint of the other path of Śreṇika, do not adopt it.

[05:6]

近代は大宋國に諸山の主人とあるやから、國師のごとくなるはあるべからず。むかしより國師にひとしかるべき知識、いまだかつて出世せず。しかあるに、世人あやまりておもはく、臨濟・徳山も國師にひとしかるべし、と。かくのごとくのやからのみおほし。あはれむべし、明眼の師なきこと。

In recent times among those fellows who serve as the heads of the various mountains in the Land of the Great Song, there could be none like the National Teacher.²⁶ Since long ago, no wise friend to equal the National Teacher has appeared in the world. However, people of the world mistakenly believe that Linji and Deshan must also be the equal of the National Teacher.²⁷ There are so many types like this. How deplorable that there are no clear-eyed teachers.

24 **the Old Buddha of Caoxi** (*Sōkei kobutsu* 曹溪古佛): I.e., the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng 慧能 of Caoxi 曹溪.

a great wise friend both in the heavens and among humans (*tenjō ningen no dai zen-chishiki nari* 天上人間の 大善知識なり): Allusion to the tradition, mentioned elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō*, that Huizhong was teacher, on earth, to the emperors of China and, in the heavens, to Indra, king of the devas.

25 **model for our study** (*sangaku no kikan* 參學の龜鑑): “Model” here loosely translates the term “tortoise mirror” (*kikan* 龜鑑), something that provides a “pattern” for behavior, as cracks in a heated tortoise shell were used by diviners in ancient China.

26 **various mountains** (*shozan* 諸): Also read *shosan*. A term for the major Buddhist monasteries.

27 **Linji and Deshan** (*Rinzai Tokusan* 臨濟徳山): I.e., Linji Yixuan 臨濟義玄 (d. 866), founder of the Linji 臨濟 lineage; and his contemporary Deshan Xuanjian 徳山宣鑑 (780-865). These two figures are singled out for criticism elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

[05:7]

いはゆる佛祖の保任する即心は佛は、外道・二乗のゆめにもみるところにあらず。唯佛祖與佛祖のみ即心は佛しきたり、究盡しきたる。聞著あり、行取あり、證著あり。

“*This mind itself is the buddha*” maintained by the buddhas and ancestors is something the other paths or the two vehicles have not seen even in their dreams. *Only buddhas and ancestors with buddhas and ancestors alone have been doing “this mind itself is the buddha,”* have been exhaustively investigating it.²⁸ They have the hearing of it; they have the practice of it; they have the verification of it.

[05:8]

佛、百草を拈却しきたり、打失しきたる。しかあれども、丈六の金身に説似せず。即、公案あり、見成を相待せず、敗壞を廻避せず。是、三界あり、退出にあらず、唯心にあらず。心、牆壁あり、いまだ泥水せず、いまだ造作せず。あるひは即心は佛を參究し、心即佛是を參究し、佛即是心を參究し、即心佛是を參究し、是佛心即を參究す。かくのごとく參究、まさしく即心は佛、これを擧して即心は佛に正傳するなり。かくのごとく正傳して今日にいたれり。

“The buddha”: It has been taking away, has been losing, the hundred grasses.²⁹ Nevertheless, we do not describe it as the sixteen-foot golden body.³⁰ “Itself”: There is a *kōan*; it does not depend on realization; it does

28 **Only buddhas and ancestors with buddhas and ancestors alone have been doing “this mind itself is the buddha”** (*yui busso yo busso nomi soku shin ze butsu shikitar* 唯佛祖與佛祖のみ即心は佛しきたり): Dōgen here creates the novel predicate “to do this mind itself is the buddha” (*soku shin ze butsu su* 即心は佛す). The expression “only buddhas and ancestors with buddhas and ancestors” recalls a passage in Kumārajīva’s translation of the *Lotus Sūtra* occurring often in the *Shōbōgenzō*; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Only buddhas with buddhas can exhaustively investigate the real marks of the dharmas.”

29 **“The buddha”** (*butsu* 佛): Dōgen here begins a set of short comments on each of the four words in the expression “this mind itself is the buddha.” The translation treats each of the words as the topic, rather than the grammatical subject of the comment that follows. Dōgen’s order here rearranges the expression to “the buddha itself is the mind.”

It has been taking away, has been losing, the hundred grasses (*hyakusō o nenkyaku shikitar*, *dashitsu shikitaru* 百草を拈却しきたり、打失しきたる): “The hundred grasses” (*hyakusō* 百草) is a common term for the manifold phenomena of the world. The point here may be that the term “buddha” seems to have set aside the phenomenal world.

30 **we do not describe it as the sixteen-foot golden body** (*jōroku no konjin ni setsuji sezu* 丈六の金身に説似せず): Or, perhaps, “we do not describe them [i.e. the hundred grasses] as the sixteen-foot golden body”; a standard reference to the body (or the standing image) of a buddha. The association here with “the hundred grasses” may reflect the well-known Chan saying, referred to several times in the *Shōbōgenzō*, “to use one blade of grass as a sixteen-foot golden body”; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “One blade of grass.”

not escape destruction.³¹ “Is”: There are the three realms.³² It is not that they are withdrawn; it is not that they are only mind.³³ “Mind”: There are fences and walls.³⁴ They never [consist of] mud and water; they are never constructed.³⁵

We investigate “*this mind itself is the buddha*,” or we investigate “*itself this mind the buddha is*,” investigate “*the buddha itself is this mind*,” investigate “*this mind itself the buddha is*,” investigate “*is the buddha this mind itself*.”³⁶ This kind of investigation is truly “*this mind itself is the buddha*”; it takes this up and directly transmits it to “*this mind itself is the buddha*.”³⁷ Directly transmitted in this way, it has come down to the present day.

31 **“Itself”** (*soku* 即): A particle expressing identity or immediacy: “precisely this,” “this very,” “just then,” etc.

There is a kōan; it does not depend on realization (*kōan ari, genjō o sōtai sezu* 公案あり、見成を相待せず): From the well-known “realized kōan” (or “settled case”; *genjō kōan* 見成公案; more commonly written 現成公案). See Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Realized kōan.”

32 **“Is”: There are the three realms** (*ze, sangai ari* 是、三界あり): For the “three realms,” see above, Note 12.

33 **It is not that they are withdrawn; it is not that they are only mind** (*taishutsu ni arazu, yui shin ni arazu* 退出にあらず、唯心にあらず): The translation takes the unexpressed subject of both phrases as “the three realms”; but the sense of the former phrase is uncertain and might better be understood as “one does not withdraw from them (i.e., enter nirvāṇa).” The latter phrase recalls the common claim that “the three realms are only mind” (*sangai yui shin* 三界唯心); see Supplementary Notes.

34 **“Mind”: There are fences and walls** (*shin shō heki ari* 心牆壁あり): Invoking the famous Chan saying, usually associated with the above-cited Nanyang Huizhong 南陽慧忠, that the buddha mind is “fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles” (*shō heki ga ryaku* 牆壁瓦礫), to which Dōgen will refer below. See Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles.”

35 **They never [consist of] mud and water** (*imada deisui sezu* いまだ泥水せず): Seemingly a reference to the material of the walls, but perhaps also invoking the common Chan use of “mud and water” for the “dirty” work of teaching Buddhism in the world; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Dragged through the mud and drenched with water.” The novel use of *deisui* 泥水 as a predicate also occurs in “Shōbōgenzō angō” 正法眼藏安居.

36 **or we investigate “itself this mind the buddha is”** (*shin soku butsu ze* 心即佛是): The translation here and in the following three phrases struggles to express Dōgen’s four variations on the syntax of the saying, despite the grotesque linguistic consequences. Most interpreters take the point of this exercise to be that each of the four words in the saying is equal to the others.

37 **This kind of investigation is truly “this mind itself is the buddha”; it takes this up and directly transmits it to “this mind itself is the buddha”** (*kaku no gotoku no sankyū, masashiku soku shin ze butsu, kore o ko shite sokushin ze butsu ni shōden suru nari* かくのごとくの参究、まさしく即心是佛、これを擧して即心是佛に正傳するな

[05:9] {1:57}

いはゆる正傳しきたれる心といふは、一心一切法、一切法一心なり。このゆえに古人いはく、若人識得心、大地無寸土。しるべし、心を識得するとき、蓋天撲落し、市地裂破す。あるひは心を識得すれば、大地さらにあつさ三寸をます。

The mind said to have been “directly transmitted” means “one mind is all dharmas, all dharmas are one mind.”³⁸ Therefore, an ancient has said, “If a person knows the mind, there isn’t an inch of ground on the whole earth.”³⁹ We should know that, when we know the mind, the whole of heaven crashes down and the entire earth is rent asunder.⁴⁰ Or, when one knows the mind, the whole earth gets three inches thicker.

[05:10]

古徳云、作麼生是妙淨明心、山河大地・日月星辰。

A virtuous one of old has said, “What is the wondrous, pure, clear mind? The mountains, rivers, and the whole earth, the sun, moon, and stars.”⁴¹

[05:11]

あきらかにしりぬ、心とは山河大地なり、日月星辰なり。しかあれども、この道取するところ、すすめば不足あり、しりぞくればあまれり。山河大地心は、山河大地のみなり、さらに、波浪なし、風煙なし。日月星辰心は、日月星辰のみなり、さらに、きりなし、かすみなし。生死去來心は、

り): A tentative translation of a sentence subject to varied readings. The sense seems to be that the expression “this mind itself is the buddha” is “directly transmitted” when it is subjected to “this kind of investigation.”

38 “one mind is all dharmas, all dharmas are one mind” (*isshin issai hō, issai hō isshin* 一心一切法、一切法一心): In his “*Shōbōgenzō tsuki*” 正法眼藏都機, Dōgen repeats this sentence as the saying of “an old buddha” (*kobutsu* 古佛). While similar passages do appear in earlier texts, the actual source of Dōgen’s version has not been identified.

39 an ancient has said (*kojin iwaku* 古人いわく): I.e., Changling Shouzhou 長靈守卓 (1065-1123), whose saying can be found at *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄, T.2076.51:464a26. The expression “there isn’t an inch of ground on the whole earth” (*daichi mu sun do* 大地無寸土) is a fairly common one in Chan texts and occurs elsewhere in the *Shōbōgenzō*.

40 the entire earth is rent asunder (*sōchi reppa* 市地裂破): More commonly written *sōchi* 匝地. Dōgen reuses this image, together with the “inch of ground” mentioned above, in his “*Shōbōgenzō angō*” 正法眼藏安居: when the summer retreat is dissolved, “it rends asunder the entire earth, without an inch of ground remaining” (*sōchi o reppa su, nokoreru sundo arazu* 市地を裂破す、のこれる寸土あらず).

41 A virtuous one of old (*kotoku* 古徳): I.e., Weishan Lingyou 滄山靈祐 (771-853). The quotation reworks a conversation between Lingyou and his disciple Yangshan Huiji 仰山慧寂 (803-887) recorded in Dōgen’s *shinji Shōbōgenzō* 眞字正法眼藏 (DZZ.5:212, case 168); see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Sun, moon, and stars.”

生死去來のみなり、さらに、迷なし、悟なし。牆壁瓦礫心は、牆壁瓦礫のみなり、さらに、泥なし、水なし。四大五蘊心は、四大五蘊のみなり、さらに、馬なし、猿なし。椅子拂子心は、椅子拂子のみなり、さらに、竹なし、木なし。かくのごとくなるがゆえに、即心是佛、不染汚即心是佛なり、諸佛、不染汚諸佛なり。

It is clearly understood that “the mind” is “the mountains, rivers, and the whole earth,” is “the sun, moon, and stars.” Although this is so, in what is said here, if you advance, it is not enough, if you step back, it is too much.⁴² The mind of “mountains, rivers, and the whole earth” is just mountains, rivers, and the whole earth: there are no additional waves and billows, no winds and vapors.⁴³ The mind of “sun, moon, and stars” is just sun, moon, and stars: there is no additional fog, no mist.⁴⁴ The mind of “birth and death, coming and going,” is just birth and death, coming and going: there is no additional delusion, no awakening.⁴⁵ The mind of “fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles” is just fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles: there is no additional mud, no water.⁴⁶ The mind of the four elements and five aggregates is just the four elements and five aggregates: there are no additional horses, no monkeys.⁴⁷ The mind of the chair and the whisk is

42 **if you advance, it is not enough, if you step back, it is too much** (*susumeba fusoku ari, shirizokureba amareri* すすめば不足あり、しりぞくればあまれり): Perhaps meaning that this saying at once falls short of what might be said and says more than what should be said. See Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Stepping forward and stepping back.”

43 **no additional waves and billows, no winds and vapors** (*sara ni harō nashi, fūen nashi* さらに波浪なし、風煙なし): Dōgen begins here excluding a set of terms used to qualify or affect the mind. The mind, for example, is regularly likened to water, and meditators are told to still the “waves” of the mind, and to protect themselves from “winds and vapors.”

44 **no additional fog, no mist** (*sara ni kiri nashi, kasumi nashi* さらにきりなし、かすみなし): As in the common simile of the mind likened to the sun (or moon) behind the “fog” (*kiri* きり) and “mist” (*kasumi* かすみ) of ignorance.

45 **The mind of “birth and death, coming and going”** (*shōji korai shin* 生死去來心): I.e., the mind subject to the vicissitudes of rebirth.

46 **The mind of “fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles”** (*shō heki ga ryaku shin* 牆壁瓦礫心): See Note 34, above.

no additional mud, no water (*sara ni dei nashi, sui nashi* さらに泥なし、水なし): See Note 35, above.

47 **four elements and five aggregates** (*shidai goun* 四大五蘊): I.e., the four primary forms of matter (S. *mahābhūta*) — earth, water, fire, and wind — of which the physical world is composed; and the five “heaps” (S. *skandha*) — form, sensation, perception, formations, and consciousness — into which the psychophysical organism can be analyzed. See Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Four elements and five aggregates.”

no additional horses, no monkeys (*sara ni ba nashi, en nashi* さらに馬なし、猿なし): From the common use of wild horses and forest monkeys as metaphors for the restless

just the chair and the whisk: there is no additional bamboo, no wood.⁴⁸ Since it is like this, “*this mind itself is the buddha*” is an undefiled “*mind itself is the buddha*.” The buddhas are undefiled buddhas.⁴⁹

[05:12] {1:58}

しかあればすなはち、即心是佛とは、發心・修行・菩提・涅槃の諸佛なり。いまだ發心・修行・菩提・涅槃せざるは、即心是佛にあらず。たとひ一刹那に發心修證するも、即心是佛なり、たとひ一極微中に發心修證するも、即心是佛なり、たとひ無量劫に發心修證するも、即心是佛なり、たとひ一念中に發心修證するも、即心是佛なり、たとひ半拳裏に發心修證するも、即心是佛なり。しかあるを、長劫に修行作佛するは即心是佛にあらず、といふは、即心是佛をいまだ見ざるなり、いまだしらざるなり、いまだ學せざるなり。即心是佛を開演する正師を見ざるなり。

Such being the case, “*this mind itself is the buddha*” means the buddhas who bring forth the mind [of bodhi], practice, attain bodhi, and enter nirvāṇa. Those who have not brought forth the mind, practiced, attained bodhi, and entered nirvāṇa are not [what is referred to by] “*this mind itself is the buddha*.” Even if we bring forth the mind and practice and verify for a single *kṣana*, it is “*this mind itself is the buddha*”; even if we bring forth the mind and practice and verify within one atom, it is “*this mind itself is the buddha*”; even if we bring forth the mind and practice and verify for innumerable kalpas, it is “*this mind itself is the buddha*”; even if we bring forth the mind and practice and verify within a single thought, it is “*this mind itself is the buddha*”; even if we bring forth the mind and practice and verify in half a fist, it is “*this mind itself is the buddha*.” However, those who say that to practice over long kalpas to become a buddha is not “*this mind itself is the buddha*” have not yet seen “*this mind itself is the*

mind, as in the familiar expression “the will is a horse; the mind, a monkey” (*iba shin'en* 意馬心猿).

48 **The mind of the chair and the whisk** (*isu hossu shin* 椅子拂子心): An unusual combination, the Zen master’s “whisk” (*hossu* 拂子) usually being paired with his “staff” (*shujō* 拄杖); the “chair” (*isu* 椅子) here belongs, rather, with the following “bamboo” and “wood.” See Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Whisk,” “Staff.”

no additional bamboo, no wood (*sara ni chiku nashi, boku nashi* さらに竹なし、木なし): Likely reflecting the conversation between Luohan Guichen 羅漢桂琛 (867-928) and his master, Xuansha Shibei 玄沙師備 (835-908), about whether to understand “the three realms are only one mind” (*sangai yui isshin* 三界唯一心) as a “chair” or as “bamboo and wood.” Recorded in Dōgen’s *shinji Shōbōgenzō* 眞字正法眼藏 (DZZ.5:186, case 112); see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “Chairs, bamboo, and wood.”

49 **undefiled “mind itself is the buddha”** (*fuzenna soku shin ze butsu* 不染汚即心是佛): Recalls the conversation, alluded to throughout the *Shōbōgenzō*, between the Sixth Ancestor and his disciple Nanyue Huairang 南嶽懷讓 (677-744), to the effect that buddhas and ancestors are “not defiled” (*fuzenna* 不染汚) by Buddhist practice and verification. Recorded at *shinji Shōbōgenzō* 眞字正法眼藏, DZZ.5:178, case 101; see Supplementary Notes, s.v. “What thing is it that comes like this?”

5. This Mind Itself Is the Buddha *Soku shin ze butsu* 即心是佛 163

buddha,” not yet understood it, not yet studied it. They have not seen a true master who expounds “*this mind itself is the buddha*.”

[05:13]

いはゆる諸佛とは、釋迦牟尼佛なり。釋迦牟尼佛、これ即心是佛なり。過去・現在・未來の諸佛、ともにほとけとなるときは、かならず釋迦牟尼佛となるなり。これ即心是佛なり。

“The buddhas” here means Buddha Śākyamuni. Buddha Śākyamuni — this is “this mind itself is the buddha.” When any of the buddhas of past, present, and future become buddhas, they invariably become Buddha Śākyamuni. This is “this mind itself is the buddha.”

正法眼藏即心是佛第五

Treasury of the True Dharma Eye
This Mind Itself Is the Buddha
Number 5

[Ryūmonji MS:]

爾時延應元年五月二十五日、在雍州宇治郡觀音導利興聖寶林寺示衆
Presented to the assembly, at the Kannon Dōri Kōshō Hōrin Monastery,
Uji District, Yōshū; twenty-fifth day, fifth month, first year of En’ō
[28 June 1239]⁵⁰

[Tōunji MS:]

于時寬元三年乙巳七月十二日在越州吉田縣大佛寺侍者寮書寫之。懷焚
Copied this in the acolyte’s quarters, Daibutsu Monastery, Yoshida Dis-
trict, Eschū; twelfth day, seventh month of the junior wood year of the
snake, the third year of Kangen [15 August 1245]. Ejō

嘉慶三年正月廿八日奉書寫、宗吾

Copied as a memorial offering, twenty-eighth day, first month, third
year of Kakyō [24 February 1389]. Sōgo⁵¹

50 The Tōunji 洞雲寺 MS shares an identical colophon.

51 Sōgo 宋吾: 1343-1406, ninth abbot of Eihei-ji.