

# B U D D H I S M

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*Donald S. Lopez, Jr., Editor*



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## Reading Others' Minds

Carl Bielefeldt

One of the earliest and best-known Japanese Zen masters is Dōgen (1200–1253). Born to the nobility, he became a Tendai monk in his youth; later, he visited Kenninji, the monastery founded by the Zen pioneer Eisai, and eventually made his way to China, accompanying one of Eisai's disciples. On the mainland, he spent four years studying at the Jingde Monastery on Mount Tiandong, where he became a disciple of the Tiandong abbot Rujing. He returned to Japan in 1127 and soon established the Kōshō Monastery on the outskirts of Kyoto. After teaching there for more than a decade and collecting a fair number of disciples, he withdrew with his followers to the relatively isolated province of Echizen (modern Fukui), where he founded the Daibutsuji, the monastery at which he would live out the rest of his days. This institution, which Dōgen later renamed Eihei-ji, became one of the headquarters of Sōtō Zen, the school that still looks back to him as its founding patriarch.

Unlike most of the early Japanese Zen figures, Dōgen was a prolific author. His reputation rests especially on a collection (originally several collections) of essays known as the *Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma* (*Shōbō genzō*). These works, prepared over many years for his monks at Kōshōji and Eihei-ji, represent a highly original and notoriously difficult body of Buddhist writing. Composed in the vernacular Japanese but incorporating much of the language of the Song Chinese Zen texts, they range broadly in subject matter from highly abstruse metaphysical reflection to concrete religious admonition and ritual instruction, historical discussion and personal recollection. The title of the collection, *Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma*, is a technical term denoting the Zen tradition, especially as preserved in the literature recording the sayings of the Zen masters. The representative essays in Dōgen's *Treasury* are typically developed in the form of commentaries on such sayings, selected to elucidate a particular Buddhist theme. Though the practice of giving brief, often playfully critical, remarks on the sayings of one's predecessors was well established in Song Zen circles, Dōgen's comments tend to be considerably more sustained and discursive than most; though his

points are often obscure and his arguments odd, more than most of his Zen contemporaries he does try to articulate in some detail his particular Buddhist vision.

The *Shōbō genzō tashintsū*, translated here as *Reading Others' Minds*, is one of the later essays in the *Treasury*, composed, according to its colophon, in 1245 at Dōgen's Daibutsu Monastery. It is not perhaps so philosophically engaging or so artfully crafted as some of his earlier, more famous pieces, but it is representative of much of his writing and deals with themes central to his religion. Perhaps more than any one else in Zen tradition, Dōgen's religion was centered on the practice of seated meditation (*zazen*), what he sometimes liked to call "just sitting" (*shikan taza*). Indeed, so fixed was his faith in this practice that he regularly identified it as the very essence of Buddhism, the "treasury of the eye of the true dharma" itself, the "marrow of Bodhidharma" transmitted by all the authentic patriarchs of Zen. As the very essence of Buddhism, seated meditation was, according to Dōgen, more than a psycho-physical exercise intended to still the mind, focus the attention, and generate spiritual insight; it was rather an expression of the enlightened state itself, the actualization of the universal "buddha nature" that the Zen teachings had long held was inherent in all beings. Thus, as Dōgen liked to say, seated meditation was beyond the human intention to "make a buddha"; it was rather the "act of a buddha," the "performance," or "conduct," of a buddha.

The identification of religious practice with the higher acts of a buddha has affinities with, and was no doubt historically influenced by, the tantric teachings popular among Dōgen's Japanese contemporaries; but for Dōgen himself, this truth was the exclusive preserve of the Zen tradition and indeed of those few masters within the tradition who had the eye to see the ultimate implications of the Zen teachings. Such masters were no mere spiritual "commoners," nor even advanced spiritual adepts; they were one with ultimate reality itself and, as such, beyond the reaches of ordinary experience and understanding, beyond even the stages of the Buddhist spiritual path and the categories of Buddhist soteriological doctrine. It is this transcendent status of the authentic Zen master that is celebrated in our text here.

The title theme of *Reading Others' Minds* concerns an interesting and recurrent issue in the Zen literature. Throughout the history of Buddhism, from its earliest days in India, it was widely assumed that contemplative adepts, whether Buddhist or not, could develop paranormal psychic powers. In a standard formulation found across a variety of Buddhist texts, it was said that one who had mastered the basic trance states of the four dhyānas could cultivate five kinds of powers, known collectively as the "superknowledges" (*abhijñā*), or in East Asian usage as the "spiritual penetrations" (*jinzū*): physical transformations and psychic travel, paranormal vision (including knowledge of the future), paranormal hearing, knowledge of others' thoughts, and knowledge of previous lives (both one's own and others'); to these was often added a sixth, more soteriologically significant, power that was reserved for realized Buddhist adepts: knowledge of the exhaustion of the "cankers," or spiritual afflictions.

The Zen tradition, of course, took its very name from the practice of dhyāna, and the monks of this tradition were supposed to be specialists in meditation. Hence, they were naturally expected, both in theological circles and in the popular imagination, to have access to the powers said to accrue to the contemplative, and in fact the hagiographic literature of the Zen masters includes accounts of their extraordinary, often miraculous powers. At the same time, the Zen doctrine claimed a “sudden” practice based solely on an enlightened state of “no-mind.” Since the practice was sudden, it took one directly from the mundane world of ordinary experience to the ultimate emptiness of all things, thus obviating the mediating path of traditional spiritual exercises; since it was based solely on the ultimate state of no-mind, it looked down on all lesser states of mind—even the spiritual states of the contemplative and the paranormal knowledge derived from them—as trivial and irrelevant. Thus we see in the literature of Zen a continuing need to distance the religion from the expectations of Buddhist tradition and emphasize the superiority of its practice to the powers of the contemplative. Dōgen, who put such stress on seated meditation, was particularly sensitive to this need, as is clear from his treatment of the transcendental Zen master in *Reading Others' Minds*.

The clash between the expectations of the tradition and the “sudden” style of Zen is dramatically portrayed in the root text on which Dōgen is commenting—the story of the spiritual contest between the mind-reading Indian pundit, the Tripiṭaka Master “Big Ears,” and the mind-boggling Chinese Zen master, the National Teacher Huizhong. The Zen master boggles the pundit’s mind because his own mind does not fit the latter’s image of the spiritual practitioner: it is at once scandalously at home in the most secular, most natural experience and yet at the same time completely free from all experience. Meanwhile, the Tripiṭaka Master remains stuck, as it were, in the sacred realm “between” these two freedoms, with the merely supernatural powers of the entrancing (and entranced) “fox spirit.”

Huizhong, a disciple of the famous Sixth Patriarch, was well known in Zen circles, and was himself sometimes said to have mind-reading powers; the tale of his defeat of the Tripiṭaka Master (actually only one version of a popular story) was the subject of comment by many later masters. Dōgen takes up a number of these comments and rejects them all: first, because they assume that the contest in the story concerns mind reading, rather than the Buddhist understanding of the ultimate nature of things; second, because they assume that the Indian scholar might have some inkling of the Zen master’s mind. This latter point he argues along two lines: first, that the ability to read minds is an insignificant Indian trick, with no power to get at the mind in any important sense; second, that the mind of the authentic Zen master, even when it is at play in the world, is not something that can be got at. Finally, Dōgen seems to conclude, in a rather obscure argument, that if we want to talk in serious Buddhist terms about reading others’ minds, we shall have to question the very categories of mind and body, self and other.

*Reading Others' Minds* is not the most difficult of Dōgen’s writing, but Dōgen’s writing is always difficult, and there are passages in this text about which readers

disagree and for which the translation must be considered tentative. This English version seeks to preserve something of the difficulties and ambiguities of Dōgen's style by retaining as far as possible its elliptic, sometimes puzzling syntax and its peculiar, sometimes enigmatic diction, and resisting the temptation to "cook" the text with interpolation or paraphrase; terms or passages that seem particularly odd or problematic in the English are sometimes set off by quotation marks or amplified by brief explanation in square brackets. The translation is based on the text edited by Terada Tōru and Mizuno Yaoko, in *Dōgen*, vol. 2, *Nihon shisō taikei* 13 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), pp. 282–92.

## Reading Others' Minds

The National Teacher [Dazheng] Huizhong [d. 775 C.E.], of the Guangzhai Monastery in the Western Capital [Changan], was a native of Juji, in the province of Yue [modern Zhejiang]; his family name was Ran. After receiving the mind seal [of enlightenment from the Sixth Patriarch], he stayed at Dangzi Valley, Mount Baiyai, in Nanyang [modern Henan], where for more than forty years he never descended from his monastery. Word of his spiritual practice reached the imperial capital, and in the second year of the Shangyuan era [761] of the Tang Emperor Suzong [r. 756–762], an imperial commissioner, Sun Zhaojin, was dispatched to summon him to the capital. There he was received with the respect due a teacher and installed in the Xichan cloister of the Qianfu Monastery. Upon the ascension of the Emperor Daizong [r. 762–779], he was reinstalled in the Guangzhai Monastery, where for sixteen years he taught the dharma in accord with the spiritual needs of his audiences.

During this time, a certain Tripiṭaka Master from the Western Heavens [India] named Daer [Big Ears] arrived in the capital, claiming to have achieved the wisdom eye [that knows] the minds of others. The emperor ordered the National Teacher [Huizhong] to test him.

As soon as the Tripiṭaka Master saw the Teacher, he bowed and stood [respectfully] off to his right side.

The Teacher asked him, "You have the penetration of others' minds?"

"It's nothing much," he answered.

"Tell me," said the Teacher, "where is this old monk right now?"

The Tripiṭaka Master said, "Reverend Preceptor, you are the teacher to a nation; how could you go off to Xichuan to watch the boat races?"

The Teacher asked again, "Tell me, where is this old monk right now?"

The Tripiṭaka Master said, "Reverend Preceptor, you are the teacher to a nation; how could you be on the Tianjin bridge watching the playing monkeys?"

The Teacher asked a third time, "Tell me, where is this old monk right now?"

The Tripitaka Master said nothing for awhile, not knowing where the Teacher had gone.

The Teacher said, "This fox spirit! Where's his penetration of others' minds?"

The Tripitaka Master had nothing to say.

A monk asked Zhaozhou [778–897], "I don't understand why the Tripitaka Master Daer couldn't see where the National Teacher was the third time. Where was he?"

Zhaozhou said, "He was on the Tripitaka Master's nose."

A monk asked Xuansha [835–908], "If he was on his nose, why didn't he see him?"

Xuansha said, "Because he was too close."

A monk asked Yangshan [803–887], "Why didn't the Tripitaka Master Daer see the National Teacher the third time?"

Yangshan said, "The first two times were 'the mind that plays across objects.' After that, he entered 'the samādhi of the personal enjoyment [of enlightenment]'; that's why the Tripitaka Master couldn't see him."

Duan of Haihui [1025–1072] said, "If the National Teacher was on the Tripitaka Master's nose, why would it be hard to see him? What he doesn't realize is that the National Teacher was in the Tripitaka Master's eye."

Xuansha summoned the Tripitaka Master, saying, "Tell me, did you really see [his mind] the first two times?"

[Of this,] the Chan Master Mingjue Zhongxian of Xuedou [980–1052] said, "Defeated! Defeated!"

From long ago there have been many "stinking fists" who offered remarks and comments on the case of the National Teacher Dazheng [Huizhong] testing the Tripitaka Master Daer, but in particular we have these five old fists. Yet, while there is a sense in which each of these five venerable worthies may be "on the mark, right on the mark," there is much in the conduct of the National Teacher that they do not see. The reason is that until now everyone has thought that the Tripitaka Master correctly knows the whereabouts of the National Teacher the first two times he is asked. This is a major error by our predecessors—one that their successors should not fail to realize. My doubts about these five venerable worthies are of two sorts: first, that they do not know the National Teacher's basic intention in testing the Tripitaka Master; second, that they do not know the National Teacher's body and mind.

When I say that they do not know the National Teacher's basic intention in testing the Tripitaka Master, I mean this: that his basic intention in initially saying, "Tell me, where is this old monk right now?" is to test whether the

Tripiṭaka Master has the eye to see the Buddha's dharma—to test, that is, whether he has the penetration of others' minds [as understood] in the Buddha's dharma. If at that point the Tripiṭaka Master had the Buddha's dharma, when he is asked "Where is this old monk right now?" he would have some "way out of the body," some "personal advantage." The National Teacher's saying "Where is this old monk right now?" is like his asking "What is 'this old monk'?" "What time is 'right now'?" His question "Where?" means "Where is here?" There is a reason behind his asking what to call this "old monk": a national teacher is not always an "old monk"; an "old monk" is always a "fist." That the Tripiṭaka Master Daer, though he came all the way from the Western Heavens, does not understand this is because he has not studied the way of the Buddha, because he has only learned the ways of the infidels and the two vehicles.

The National Teacher asks again, "Tell me, where is this old monk right now?" Here again the Tripiṭaka Master only offers worthless words.

Again the National Teacher asks, "Tell me, where is this old monk right now?" This time the Tripiṭaka Master is silent for a while but is at a loss and has no reply. Then the National Teacher rebukes him, saying, "This fox spirit! Where's his penetration of others' minds?" Yet though he is thus rebuked, the Tripiṭaka Master still has nothing to say, no reply, no "penetrating passageway."

Yet our predecessors all think that the National Teacher's rebuke of the Tripiṭaka Master is only because, although the Master knows the Teacher's whereabouts the first two times, he does not know and cannot see [where the Teacher is] the third time. This is a big mistake. The National Teacher rebukes the Tripiṭaka Master because from the beginning the Tripiṭaka Master has never seen the Buddha's dharma even in his dreams, not because although he knows the first two times he does not know the third time. In short, he rebukes him because, while claiming to have attained the penetration of others' minds, he does not know that penetration.

First, the National Teacher tests him by asking whether there is the penetration of others' minds in the Buddha's dharma. He answers, "It's nothing much," suggesting that there is. Afterwards, the National Teacher thought to himself, "If we say there is the penetration of others' minds in the Buddha's dharma, if we attribute this penetration to the Buddha's dharma, this [that is, answers of this sort (?)] is what it's like. If there's nothing brought up in what we have to say, it's not the Buddha's dharma." Even if the Tripiṭaka Master had something to say the third time, if it were like the first two times, it would not be anything to say; he would be rebuked for all [three answers]. The National Teacher questions him three times in order to ask again and again whether the Tripiṭaka Master has really heard his question.

My second point is that none of our predecessors have known the body and mind of the National Teacher. The body and mind of the National Teacher is not something that Tripiṭaka dharma masters can easily see, can easily know; not something reached by those on the "ten ranks of the holy and three ranks



of the wise"; not something understood by the "virtually enlightened, heir apparent" [to buddhahood]. How could a commoner scholar of the Tripitaka know the full body of the National Teacher?

We should get this principle fixed [in our minds]. To say that a scholar like the Tripitaka Master could see or could know the body and mind of the National Teacher is to slander the Buddha's dharma; to consider that [the National Teacher] stands shoulder to shoulder with the masters of the sūtras and commentaries is the extreme of madness. Do not think that those types who seek to get the penetration of others' minds can know the whereabouts of the National Teacher.

The penetration of others' minds is a local custom of the country of the Western Heavens, and there are occasionally types there who cultivate it. We have never yet heard accounts of an edifying example of such types having verified the Buddha's dharma on the strength of their penetration of others' minds, without depending on production of the "thought of enlightenment" and the right view of the Greater Vehicle. Even after practicing the penetration of others' minds, they must, like ordinary commoners, go on to produce the thought of enlightenment and cultivate the practice, and thereby themselves verify the way of the Buddha. If one could know the way of the Buddha simply on the strength of the penetration of others' minds, all the holy men of the past would have first cultivated this penetration and used it to know the fruit of buddhahood; yet this has never happened in all the appearances in the world of a thousand buddhas and ten thousand patriarchs. If it cannot know the way of the buddhas and patriarchs, what good is it? It is useless to the way of the Buddha.

Those who have the penetration of others' minds and ordinary commoners who do not are equal; they are the same in both maintaining the buddha nature. Those who study the Buddha's [dharma] should not think that those with the "five penetrations" or the "six penetrations" of the infidels and two vehicles are superior to the ordinary commoner. Those who simply have the mind to pursue the way and who would study the Buddha's dharma are superior to those with these penetrations. They are like the kalavinka bird, whose voice even inside the shell is superior to that of other birds.

Moreover, what is called in the Western Heavens the penetration of others' minds is better described as the penetration of others' thoughts. Even if it can manage to be conscious of the arising of thoughts, it is quite at a loss when thoughts have not arisen. This is really quite laughable. The mind is not necessarily thoughts; thoughts are not necessarily the mind. And when the mind is thoughts, the penetration of others' minds cannot know this; when thoughts are the mind, the penetration of others' minds cannot know this.

This being the case, the five penetrations or six penetrations of the Western Heavens are all quite useless, not the equal of "cutting the grasses and cultivating the paddies" in our country. Therefore, from Cinasthāna [China] to the east, the worthies of the past have not cared to cultivate the five penetrations

or six penetrations, since they have no use. Even a six-foot jewel is useful, but the five or six penetrations are useless. [As the old saying reminds us,] a “six-foot jewel” is not a treasure, but an “inch of time” is pivotal. For those who value that inch of time, who would cultivate the five or six penetrations?

Thus we should have very firmly fixed [in our minds] the principle that the power of the penetration of others’ minds cannot reach the boundaries of the Buddha wisdom. To think nevertheless, as do our five venerable worthies, that the Tripitaka Master knew the whereabouts of the National Teacher the first two times he was asked is greatly mistaken. The National Teacher is a buddha and patriarch; the Tripitaka Master is a commoner. How could there be any question of their seeing each other?

First, the National Teacher asks, “Tell me, where is this old monk right now?” There is nothing hidden in this question; what it has to say is fully apparent. That the Tripitaka Master might not understand it is not so bad; that the five venerable worthies do not hear it or see it is a serious mistake. [The text] says that the National Teacher asked, “Where is this old monk right now?” It does not say that he asked, “Where is this old monk’s mind right now?” or “Where are this old monk’s thoughts right now?” This has something to say that we should definitely hear and understand, see and take to heart. Nevertheless, [our worthies] do not understand or see it; they do not hear or see what the National Teacher has to say. Therefore, they do not understand the body and mind of the National Teacher, for it is having something to say that makes him a national teacher; without something to say he would not be a national teacher. How much less, then, can they understand that the body and mind of the National Teacher are not big or small, self or other. They might as well have forgotten that he has a head or a nose.

Though the spiritual conduct of the National Teacher be unceasing, how could he “figure to make a buddha”? Therefore, he should not be compared with a buddha. Since the National Teacher has the body and mind of the Buddha’s dharma, we should not measure him by the practice and verification of the spiritual penetrations, we should not hem and haw over the notion [that he is in a trance state] of “severing considerations and forgetting objects.” He is not something that can be determined by either deliberating or not deliberating. It is not the case either that he has or does not have the buddha nature; it is not the case that his is the [buddha’s] “body of empty space.” This kind of body and mind of the National Teacher is something entirely unknown [to any of our five venerable worthies]. In the community of [the Sixth Patriarch, Huineng of] Caogi, apart from [the disciples] Qingyuan and Nanyue, only this National Teacher Dazheng was a buddha and patriarch.

Now we need to question all our five venerable worthies.

Zhaozhou says that the Tripitaka Master could not see the National Teacher because the latter was “on his nose.” This saying has nothing to say. How could the National Teacher be on the Tripitaka Master’s nose? The Tripitaka Master

does not yet have a nose. If we admit that the Tripiṭaka Master has a nose, then the National Teacher should see him. Even if we admit that the National Teacher does see him, this would only mean that they are "nose to nose"; it would not mean that the Tripiṭaka Master and the National Teacher see each other.

Xuansha says [that the Tripiṭaka Master did not see the National Teacher the third time] "because he was too close." To be sure, this may be "too close," but it still has not hit it. What is this "too close"? I am afraid that Xuansha still does not understand "too close," has not studied "too close." I say this because he understands only that there is no seeing each other in "too close"; he does not understand that seeing each other is "too close." We have to say that, in terms of the Buddha's dharma, he is the "farthest of the far." If we say that [the National Teacher] is too close only the third time, then he must have been too far away the first two times. Now, I want to ask Xuansha, "What is it that you call 'too close'? Is it a fist? Is it an eye? From now on, do not say that there is nothing seen 'too close.'"

Yangshan says, "The first two times were 'the mind that plays across objects.' After that, he entered 'the samādhi of the personal enjoyment [of enlightenment]'; that's why the Tripiṭaka Master couldn't see him." Yangshan, while being from the Eastern Earth [China], you have a reputation in the Western Heavens as a little Śākyamuni, but your saying here is a big error. "The mind that plays across objects" and the "samādhi of the personal enjoyment [of enlightenment]" are not different; hence, we cannot say that [the Tripiṭaka Master] does not see him by reason of some difference between these two. Therefore, though you set up "the mind that plays across objects" and "the personal enjoyment [of enlightenment]" as the reasons, saying this is no saying. If you say that when I enter "the samādhi of the personal enjoyment [of enlightenment]," others cannot see me, then "the personal enjoyment [of enlightenment]" would not be able to verify itself, and there could be no cultivation and verification of it. Yangshan, if you think that the Tripiṭaka Master really sees, if you believe that he really knows the Teacher's whereabouts the first two times, you are not yet a man who has studied the Buddha's [dharma]. The Tripiṭaka Master Daer does not know or see the whereabouts of the National Teacher, not only the third time but the first two times as well. Judging from the level of this saying, we have to say not only that the Tripiṭaka Master does not know the National Teacher's whereabouts but that Yangshan does not yet know either. Let us ask Yangshan, "Where is the National Teacher right now?" If he thinks to open his mouth, we should give him a big shout.

In Xuansha's summons [to the Tripiṭaka Master], he says, "Tell me, did you really see [his mind] the first two times?" These words sound like they are saying what needs to be said, and Xuansha should learn from his own words.

But granted that this phrase has its value, it seems to be saying only that [the Tripiṭaka Master's] seeing is like not seeing. Hence, it is not right. Hearing this, Zhongxian, the Chan Master Mingjue of Mount Xuedou, said, "Defeated! Defeated!" We may say this when we have taken what Xuansha says as a [significant] saying but not when we take his saying as not a saying.

Duan of Haihui says, "If the National Teacher was on the Tripiṭaka Master's nose, why would it be hard to see him? What he doesn't realize is that the National Teacher was in the Tripiṭaka Master's eye." This also only discusses the third time and does not criticize, as it should, the fact that [the Tripiṭaka Master] never sees [the National Teacher] the first two times. How can [Duan] know whether the National Teacher is on his nose or in his eye? If this is what he says, we have to say that he has not heard the words of the National Teacher. The Tripiṭaka Master still does not have a nose or eyes. Even if we were to say that he does maintain eyes and nose, if the National Teacher were to enter them, the Tripiṭaka Master's eyes and nose would immediately burst. Since they would burst, they are not a cave or cage for the National Teacher.

None of our five venerable worthies knows the National Teacher. He is the old buddha of his age, the tathāgata of his world. He illumined and properly transmitted the "treasury of the eye of the true dharma" of the Buddha; he surely maintained the "eye of the soapberry" [from the seeds of which the Buddhist rosary is made]. He properly transmitted [these eyes] to "his own buddhahood" and to the "buddhahood of others." Though we may say that he studied together with the Buddha Śākyamuni, he studied at the same time as the seven buddhas [of which Śākyamuni was the last] and, in addition, studied together with all the buddhas of the three ages [of past, present, and future]. He realized the way before the King of Emptiness [the ruling buddha of the eon when all is reduced to emptiness]; he realized the way after the King of Emptiness; he practiced together and realized the way precisely with the Buddha King of Emptiness. Though we may say that the National Teacher naturally made this Sahā world his domain, his Sahā is not necessarily within the dharma realm; it is not within the entire world of the ten directions. The rulership of the Buddha Śākyamuni over the Sahā domain does not usurp or hinder the National Teacher's domain. Similarly, for example, the way is realized numerous times, by the earlier and later buddhas and patriarchs one after the next, without their usurping or hindering each other. This is the case because all realizations of the way by the earlier and later buddhas and patriarchs are "hindered by" the realization of the way.

From the evidence that the Tripiṭaka Master Daer does not know [the whereabouts of] the National Teacher, we should get clearly and firmly fixed [in our minds] the general principle that the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, the Lesser Vehicle types, do not know the boundaries of the buddhas and patriarchs. We should clearly understand the point of the National Teacher's rebuke of the

Tripitaka Master. It does not make sense that, although being a national teacher, he would rebuke [the Tripitaka Master] if the latter knew [his whereabouts] the first two times and failed to know only the third time: [for purposes of the test of his powers] knowing two out of three is knowing it all, in which case he should not be rebuked. Even if he were rebuked, it would not be for failing to know at all; hence, from the Tripitaka Master's perspective, it would be the National Teacher who is humiliated [by the test]. Who would trust the National Teacher if he rebuked [the Tripitaka Master] for failing to know only the third time? [On the contrary,] the Tripitaka Master could have rebuked the National Teacher on the grounds that he did have the power to know [the latter's whereabouts] the first two times.

The point of the National Teacher's rebuke of the Tripitaka Master is this: he rebukes him because from the beginning, throughout all three times, he does not know the National Teacher's whereabouts, his thoughts or his body and mind; he rebukes him because he has never seen, heard, learned, or studied the Buddha's dharma. It is because of this point that, from the first time to the last, [the National Teacher] questions him with exactly the same words. When on the first question the Tripitaka Master answers, "Reverend Preceptor, you are the teacher to a nation; how could you go off to Xichuan to watch the boat races?" the National Teacher does not acknowledge the answer, saying, "Indeed you did know where this old monk was." Instead, he simply repeats himself, asking the same question three times. Without understanding or clarifying the reason behind this, for several hundred years since the time of the National Teacher, the elders in all directions have been giving their arbitrary comments and explanations of the reasons [behind the story]. Nothing that any has said so far has been [true to] the original intent of the National Teacher or in accord with the point of the Buddha's dharma. What a pity that each of these "venerable old awls," one after the next, has missed [the meaning of the story].

In the Buddha's dharma, if we are going to say that there is the penetration of others' minds, there should be the penetration of others' bodies, the penetration of others' fists, the penetration of others' eyes. If this is the case, there should also be the penetration of one's own mind, the penetration of one's own body. And once this is the case, the penetration of one's own mind is simply one's own mind itself taking up [itself]. If we express the matter in this way, one's own mind itself is the penetration of others' minds. Let me just ask, then, "Should we take this as the penetration of others' minds, or should we take it as the penetration of one's own mind? Speak up! Speak up!" Leaving that aside, "you got my marrow" [as Bodhidharma said in acknowledging the enlightenment of his disciple Huike] is the penetration of others' minds.

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma 73.

Presented to the assembly the fourth day of the seventh month of the third year of Kangen [1245], at the Daibutsu Monastery in the province of Etsu.