

Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma  
Book 35

Spiritual Powers  
(*Shôbôgenzô jinzû*)

Translated by  
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Such spiritual powers are the tea and rice in the house of the Buddha. The Buddhas till now have not neglected them<sup>1</sup>. Among them, there are the six spiritual powers; there is the one spiritual power; there is no spiritual power; there is the supreme spiritual power<sup>2</sup>.

They have taken the form of “morning blows, three thousand; evening blows, eight hundred.” Though they were born together with the Buddha, they are not known by the Buddha; though extinguished together with the Buddha, they do not destroy the Buddha. In ascending to the heavens, they do so together; in descending from the heavens, they do so together. Cultivating the practice and getting the verification, they do so together. They are the same as the Snowy Mountains, like trees and rocks.<sup>3</sup>

The Buddhas of the past are the disciples of the Buddha Sâkyamuni. They present him with a kasaya; they present him with a stûpa. At this time, the

Buddha said, “The spiritual powers of the Buddhas are inconceivable.” This being the case, we know that the present and future are also thus.<sup>4</sup>

The Chan master Daguei was an ancestor in the thirty-seventh generation in direct descent from the Tathâgata Sâkyamuni; he was the dharma heir of Baizhang Dazhi. The present Buddhas and ancestors who have arisen throughout the ten directions, not the distant progeny of Daguei, are the distant progeny of Daguei.<sup>5</sup>

On one occasion, when Daguei was lying down, Yangshan came to visit him. Daguei turned and lay facing the wall.

Yangshan said, “Huiji is the venerable’s disciple; no need for appearances.”

Daguei went to get up. As Yangshan was about to leave, Daguei called to him, “Huiji.”

Yangshan came back. Daguei said, “Let me tell you of my dream.”

Yangshan bent down to listen. Daguei said, "Can you interpret my dream for me?"

Yangshan brought him a basin of water and a hand towel. Daguei washed his face. Just as he had finished washing his face and sat down, Xiangyan came in.

Daguei said, "Master Ji and I just did "one surpassing" spiritual power. It wasn't like the little stuff."

Xiangyan said, "Zhixian was below; I know all about it."

Daguei said, "You, sir, should try to say something."

Xiangyan went and made a cup of tea.

Daguei praised them, saying, "The spiritual power and wisdom of these two masters exceeds that of Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana."<sup>6</sup>

If we wish to understand the spiritual powers of the house of the Buddha, we should study Daguei's saying. Because it "wasn't like the little stuff," to engage in its study is called Buddhist study; not to study it is not called Buddhist study. It is the spiritual power and wisdom transmitted from heir to heir. We are not to go on to study what is studied by such as the treatise masters or the spiritual powers of the outsiders and the two vehicles in the land of the Western Heavens of Sindh.<sup>7</sup>

Now, in studying Daguei's spiritual powers, though they may be unsurpassed, we have [here] "one surpassing" perception [of them].<sup>8</sup> Beginning with "when he was lying down," we have "he turned and lay facing the wall"; we have "he went to get up"; we have "he called, 'Master Ji'"; we have "let me tell you of my dream"; we have "he had finished washing his face and sat down"; we have "Yangshan bent down to listen"; we have "he brought a basin of water and a wash cloth."

Of such [acts], Daguei says, "Master Ji and I just did 'one surpassing' spiritual power." We should study these spiritual powers. The ancestral masters who correctly transmit the Buddha Dharma speak like this. Do

not fail to say that [Gueishan] was “telling his dream and washing his face”; we should be certain that this is [as he says] “one ‘surpassing’ spiritual power.” Since he says, “it wasn’t like the little stuff,” it must not be the same as the small vehicle, a small measure, a small view. It must not be the same as the “ten holy and three wise.” They all learn the small spiritual powers and only acquire small stature; they do not reach the great spiritual powers of the Buddhas and ancestors. These are “the spiritual powers of a Buddha,” “the spiritual powers beyond the Buddha.” Those who would learn these spiritual powers should not be moved by Māra or the outsiders.<sup>9</sup>

What the Sūtra masters and treatise masters have never heard is hard [for them] to believe even when they do hear it. The two vehicles, the outsiders, the Sūtra masters and treatise masters, and the like, learn the small spiritual powers; they do not learn the great spiritual powers. The Buddhas maintain the great spiritual powers; they transmit the great spiritual powers. These are the spiritual powers of a Buddha. If they were not “the spiritual powers of a Buddha,” [Yangshan] would not “bring a basin of water and a hand towel”; there would be no “he turned and lay facing the wall”; there would be no “after he had finished washing his face and sat down.”

Covered by the power of these great spiritual powers, there are also the small spiritual powers. The great spiritual powers take in the small spiritual powers; the small spiritual powers do not know the great spiritual powers. By “small spiritual powers,” we mean “a hair follicle swallowing the vast ocean, a mustard seed containing Sumeru.” Or “emitting water from the upper body, emitting fire from the lower body,” and the like<sup>10</sup>. Further, the five powers or six powers are all small spiritual powers. These types have never experienced “the spiritual powers of a Buddha” even in their dreams.<sup>11</sup>

To say that the five powers or six powers are small spiritual powers is [to say that] the five powers and six powers are defiled by practice and

verification; they are cut off in time and place. While we have them in life, they do not appear after the body. They belong to the self and not to others. Though they may appear in this land, they do not appear in other lands. Though they may appear when we do not show them, they fail to appear when it is time to show them.<sup>12</sup>

These great spiritual powers are not like this. The teaching, practice, and verification of the Buddhas are equally brought to realization in the spiritual powers. They are not realized only in the vicinity of the Buddhas; they are also realized “beyond the Buddhas.” The manner of converting [beings] of “the Buddha of the spiritual powers” is truly inconceivable. It appears before he has a body; its appearance has nothing to do with the three junctures. If it were not for “the spiritual powers of a Buddha,” there would never be the production of the thought, the practice, the bodhi or the nirvâna of the buddhas.<sup>13</sup>

The ocean of this inexhaustible dharma realm, constant and unchanging, is all “the spiritual powers of a Buddha.” It is not only that “a hair follicle swallows the vast ocean”: a hair follicle maintains the vast ocean, a hair follicle expresses the vast ocean, a hair follicle vomits the vast ocean, a hair follicle employs the vast ocean. When the entire dharma realm has been swallowed into and vomited forth by one hair follicle, we are not to learn that, since the one entire dharma realm has become like this, there must be no more dharma realm. “A mustard seed containing Sumeru” is the same: a mustard seed vomiting Sumeru and a mustard seed expressing the dharma realm are also “the ocean of the inexhaustible treasury.”<sup>14</sup>

When a hair follicle vomits forth the vast ocean or a mustard seed vomits forth the vast ocean, they vomit it forth in a single moment; they vomit it forth in ten thousand kalpas. Since the ten thousand kalpas and the single moment have both been vomited forth from the hair follicle and the mustard seed, how are the hair follicle and mustard seed themselves

obtained? They have been obtained from the spiritual powers. Since this obtaining is itself the spiritual powers, this is just the spiritual powers giving rise to the spiritual powers. We should learn that the three worlds have no other persistence or perishing. The Buddhas disport themselves only in these spiritual powers.<sup>15</sup>

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The layman Pang Yun was an extraordinary person of the ancestral seat. He not only studied at the two seats of Jiangxi and Shitou, he met and encountered many masters of the school possessed of the way. Once he said, "The spiritual powers and the wondrous functions: bearing water and carrying firewood." We should investigate well the rationale [of this saying].<sup>16</sup>

[The term] *unsui* [in this saying] means to transport water. Doing it oneself by oneself, another doing it by another, water is transported. This is "the Buddha of spiritual powers." Although our knowledge of them may be at a certain time, the spiritual powers are the spiritual powers. It is not that, when people do not know them, their dharma is destroyed or their dharma is extinguished. Even though people do not know it, the dharma is the dharma as it is. Even if we do not know that bearing water is the spiritual powers, that the spiritual powers are bearing water is irreversible.<sup>17</sup>

[The term] *hansai* [in the saying] means to carry firewood, as the Sixth Ancestor once did. Although we may not recognize "morning blows, three thousand" as the spiritual powers, although we may not think of "evening blows, eight hundred" as the spiritual powers, they are the realization of the spiritual powers. Indeed, one who perceives the spiritual powers and wondrous functions of the Buddhas, the Tathâgatas, will inevitably attain the way. Therefore, the attainment of the way of all the Buddhas has always been accomplished through these spiritual powers.

This being the case, while the emitting of water [from the body] in the small vehicle may be a spiritual power, we should study the fact that the bearing of water is a great spiritual power. Bearing water and carrying firewood have never been discarded, nor have people neglected them. That they have, therefore, from ancient times to the present, been handed down from this [person] to that, without ever reverting for a moment, is the spiritual powers and wondrous functions. This is the great spiritual powers; they cannot be the same as “the little stuff.”<sup>18</sup>

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Once, when the great master Dongshan Wuben was attending Yunyan, Yunyan asked him,  
“What are Master Jie’s spiritual powers and wondrous functions?”  
Dongshan joined his hands, stepped forward, and stood.  
Yunyan asked again, “What about the spiritual powers and wondrous functions?”  
Dongshan paid his respects and left.<sup>19</sup>

Truly, in this episode, there is “receiving the words, understanding their sense” of the spiritual powers; there is “things exist, box and lid matching” of the spiritual powers. We should realize that the spiritual powers and wondrous functions must have their children and grandchildren, those who do not revert; they must have their eminent ancestors, those who do not advance. Do not foolishly think that they should be the same as the outsiders and two vehicles.<sup>20</sup>

On the way of the Buddha, there are the spiritual transformations and spiritual powers of the upper body and the lower body. This entire world of the ten directions is “the one true body of the sramana.” The [waters of] “the nine mountains and eight oceans,” down to “the ocean of the nature,” the waters of “the ocean of sarvajñā,” are all water emitted

from the upper body and lower body. Again, they are the water emitted from the non-upper body, the non-lower body, the non-mid body; and so on, down to the fire emitted [from the body, which] is also like this.<sup>21</sup>

This is not only [true of] water, fire, wind, and so on: not only are Buddhas emitted from the upper body, and Buddhas emitted from the lower body, and ancestors emitted from the upper body, and ancestors emitted from the lower body, and immeasurable asamkhyeya-kalpas emitted from the upper body, and immeasurable asamkhyeya-kalpas emitted from the lower body, and the ocean of the dharma realm emitted from the upper body, and the ocean of the dharma realm absorbed in the upper body; but also the vomiting out of seven or eight lands of this world and the swallowing up of two or three, are also like this.<sup>22</sup>

The four elements, the five elements, the six elements, the various elements, the incalculable elements — all are the spiritual powers emitted and submerged, the spiritual powers swallowed and vomited. The present great earth and empty space, in every direction, are swallowed up and vomited forth. Their strength is their being turned by the mustard seed; their strength is their being connected to the hair seed. Born together where knowledge does not reach; they abide where knowledge does not reach; they return where knowledge does not reach. The marks of the transformations of the “spiritual powers of the Buddha,” which surely have nothing to do with short or long — how could we merely consider them in terms of [their] measurement?<sup>23</sup>

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Long ago, when a seer with the five powers was serving the Buddha, the seer asked, “The

Buddha has six powers; I have five powers. What is that one power?”

The Buddha called the seer, saying, “Seer with the five powers.”

The sage responded.

The Buddha said, “That one power, ask me about it.”<sup>24</sup>



We should study this episode very well. How could the seer know that the

Buddha has six powers? The Buddha has immeasurable spiritual powers and wisdom, not just six powers. Even if one looks only at his six powers, the six powers cannot be exhausted. How much less, when it comes to the rest of [the Buddha's] spiritual powers, could [he] even dream of them?<sup>25</sup>

Now, let us ask [a few questions]. We should ask, even if the seer may have seen the old master Śākya, has he seen the Buddha or not? Even if he has seen the Buddha, has he seen the old master Śākya or not? We should ask, even if he has seen the old master Śākya, even if he has seen the Buddha, has he seen the seer with the five powers or not? In this questioning, [one] should study “using entanglements”; [one] should study “entanglements cut off.” How much less does [the question of] the Buddha having six powers reach [the level of] “counting the neighbour's valuables”?<sup>26</sup>

What about the point of the old master Śākya saying here, “That one power, ask me about it”? He does not say the seer has “that one power” he does not say the seer lacks it. Even if he explains the penetration or obstruction of “that one power,” how can the seer penetrate “that one power”? For, though the seer has the five powers, they are not the five powers in “the Buddha has six powers.” Even if the powers of the seer get utterly penetrated in what the powers of the Buddha penetrate, how could the powers of the seer penetrate the powers of the Buddha? If the seer could penetrate even one power of the Buddha, by this penetration he should penetrate the buddha.<sup>27</sup>

When we look at the seer, he has something resembling the powers of the Buddha; when we look at the department of the Buddha, it has

something resembling the powers of the seer. Though this may be [true of] the deportment of the Buddha, we should realize that [such deportment] is not the spiritual powers of the Buddha. Since they do not penetrate [the Buddha], none of the five powers is the same as [those of] the buddha.<sup>28</sup>

What is the use of [his] immediately asking about “that one power”? The old master Sâkya’s point is that he should be asking about even one power. He [should be] asking about “that one power”; he should be asking about “that one power.”

Even one power is not something the sage could reach. This being the case, [when we speak of] “the spiritual powers of the Buddha” and the spiritual powers of others, while the term “spiritual powers” may be the same, the term “spiritual powers” is very different.<sup>29</sup>

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In regard to this [we have the following].<sup>30</sup>

The great master Huizhao of Línjí cloister said, “An ancient has said, The Tathâgata’s presentation of the bodily marks is done to accord with the sentiments of the worldly.

Lest people produce nihilistic views, we expediently set up vacuous names.

We provisionally speak of the thirty-two and the eighty, just empty sounds.

Having a body is not the substance of his enlightenment; having no marks is his true form.<sup>31</sup>

You say that the Buddha has six powers, and that they are inconceivable. All the heavenly beings, transcendent seers, asuras, and powerful spirits have spiritual powers. Does this make them Buddhas? Followers of the way, don’t be mistaken. The asuras battled with the Heavenly King Shakra; defeated in battle, they led their eighty-four thousand followers to hide inside a lotus root. Are they not holy ones?<sup>32</sup>

What this mountain monk has mentioned are all karmic powers or dependent powers; they are not like the six powers of the Buddha. He enters the realm of form without being deluded by form, enters the realm of sound without being deluded by sound, enters the realm of smell without being deluded by smell, enters the realm of taste without being deluded by taste, enters the realm of touch without being deluded by touch, enters the realm of dharma without being deluded by dharma.<sup>33</sup>

Therefore, when he realizes that the six types — form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and dharma — are all empty marks, they cannot bind this person of the way who depends on nothing.

Though his is the defiled quality of the five aggregates, it is yet the spiritual power of walking the earth.

Followers of the way, the true Buddha is without form; the true dharma is without marks. You are just making models and making patterns on top of phantom transformations. Even supposing you get something through your seeking, it will all be fox spirits. None of it is the true Buddha, it is the view of the outsiders.<sup>34</sup>

This being the case, the six spiritual powers of the Buddhas are not something that could be reached by, not something that could be reckoned by, any of the heavenly beings or demonic spirits, or by the two vehicles and the like. The six powers of the way of the Buddha have been singly transmitted only by the disciples of the Buddha on the way of the Buddha; they are not something transmitted by others. The six powers of the Buddha are singly transmitted on the way of the Buddha; those that do not uniquely transmit them cannot be expected to know them.

We should study that those who have not singly transmitted the six powers of the Buddha are not people of the way of the buddha.<sup>35</sup>

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The Chan master Baizhang Dazhi said, “The eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are each without the stain of craving for all the dharmas, whether being or non-being — this is called “keeping the four-phrase verse”; it is also called “the four fruits.” The “six entrances” without traces are also called “the six spiritual powers.” To be unobstructed by all the dharmas, whether being or nonbeing, and not to rely on the understanding — this is called “spiritual power.” Not to guard this spiritual power — this is called “no spiritual power.” Such is the bodhisattva of no spiritual powers, whose foot prints cannot be found. He is a human beyond the Buddha, the most inconceivable human. [He] is “the heavenly being of the self.”<sup>36</sup>

The spiritual powers transmitted here by Buddha after Buddha and ancestor after ancestor are like this. The spiritual powers of the Buddhas are “the human beyond the Buddha,” the most inconceivable human,” “the heavenly being of the self,” “the bodhisattva of no spiritual powers,” “the understanding not relying,” “the spiritual powers not guarding this,” “all the dharmas not being obstructed.”<sup>37</sup>

There are now in the way of the Buddha the six spiritual powers. The Buddhas have transmitted and kept them for a long time. Not a single Buddha has failed to transmit and keep them. Those who do not transmit and keep them are not Buddhas.

Those six spiritual powers clarify, “without traces,” “the six entrances.” To say, “without traces,” [means what] an ancient has said, “The six types of spiritual functions are empty and not empty. The one circle of light, with neither inside nor outside.” “Neither inside nor outside” must be “without traces.” When, “without traces,” we practice, study, and verify, we do not move “the six entrances.” To say, “we do not move,” means, the one who moves deserves thirty blows.<sup>38</sup>

This being the case, we should study the six spiritual powers in this way. Those who are not legitimate heirs of the house of the Buddha — which of them has even heard of this principle? They just mistake chasing about outside for the observances of coming home. Further, while “the

four fruits” may be utensils on the way of the Buddha, there is no Tripitaka [master] who has correctly transmitted them. How could those who “count sand,” the types who “stumble off,” get these fruits? The types who “get a little and consider it enough” — their investigations have not mastered it; it is [something to which] only Buddha after Buddha accede.<sup>39</sup>

“The four fruits” are “to receive and hold the four-phrase verse.” “To receive and hold the four-phrase verse” means, in regard to “all dharmas, whether being or nonbeing,” “the eyes, ears, nose, and tongue are each without the stain of craving.”

“Without the stain of craving” is “undefiled.” To say [they are] “undefiled” means they are “the ordinary mind”; they are “[I] always take this seriously.”<sup>40</sup>

The correct transmission of the six powers and four fruits in the way of the Buddha is like this. We should realize that what differs from this is not the Buddha Dharma. This being the case, the way of the Buddha is always mastered from the spiritual powers. Who could doubt that, in this mastery, the smallest drop of water swallows and vomits the vast ocean; the slightest mote of dust takes up and let's goes of a tall peak? This is just the spiritual powers.

Presented to the assembly, the sixteenth day of the eleventh month of the second year of Ninji (kanato-ushi) [1241], at Kannon Dôri Kôshô Hôrinji.