The Treasury of the True Dharma Eye (Shobōgenzō) is the masterwork of Dōgen (1200–1253), founder of the Sōtō Zen Buddhist sect in Kamakura-era Japan. It is one of the most important Zen Buddhist collections, composed during a period of remarkable religious diversity and experimentation. The text is complex and compelling, famed for its eloquent yet perplexing manner of expressing the core precepts of Zen teachings and practice.

This book is a comprehensive introduction to this essential Zen text, offering a textual, historical, literary, and philosophical examination of Dōgen’s treatise. Steven Heine explores the religious and cultural context in which the Treasury was composed and provides a detailed study of the various versions of the medieval text that have been compiled over the centuries. He includes nuanced readings of Dōgen’s use of inventive rhetorical flourishes and the range of East Asian Buddhist textual and cultural influences that shaped the work. Heine explicates the philosophical implications of Dōgen’s views on contemplative experience and attaining and sustaining enlightenment, showing the depth of his distinctive understanding of spiritual awakening. Readings of Dōgen’s Treasury of the True Dharma Eye will give students and other readers a full understanding of this fundamental work of world religious literature.

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