



# Just This Is It: Dongshan and the Practice of Suchness

*Taigen Dan Leighton*

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The joy of "suchness"—the absolute and true nature inherent in all appearance—shines through the teachings attributed to Dongshan Liangjie (807–869), the legendary founder of the Caodong lineage of Chan Buddhism (the predecessor of S?t? Zen). Taigen Dan Leighton looks at the teachings attributed to Dongshan—in his Recorded Sayings and in the numerous koans in which he is featured as a character—to reveal the subtlety and depth of the teaching on the nature of reality that Dongshan expresses. Included are an analysis of the well-known teaching poem "Jewel Mirror Samadhi" and of the understanding of particular and universal expressed in the teaching of the Five Degrees. "The teachings embedded in the stories about Dongshan provide a rich legacy that has been sustained in practice traditions," says Taigen. "Dongshan's subtle teachings about engagement with suchness remain vital today for Zen people and are available for all those who wish to find meaning amid the challenges to modern life."

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