Foreword

Tung-shan Liang-chieh was intimate with the source of all categories, and thus he could present their unity and their particular virtues with vivid clarity:

A monk asked, "how does one escape hot and cold?"

"Why not go where it is neither hot nor cold?" said the Master.

"What sort of place is neither hot nor cold?" asked the monk.

"When it's cold you freeze to death; when it's hot you swelter to death."

The reason you die with the cold is that you dwell where there is neither cold nor heat. The reason you die with the birdsong is that you dwell where there is neither sound nor silence.

Dying with the cold or the birdsong is the great life of cold or the birdsong. The great life of standing up and sitting down rests firmly on the experience of body and mind falling away.

Tung-shan is renowned as the founder of the sect we know today as Sōtō Zen Buddhism, and as the author of the poetical treatise, "The Five Ranks," studies by all Zen students regardless of sect. His great achievements arise from hearing vividly with his eyes the sermons of birds and trees, and from his cultivation of that realization in tireless personal practice and teaching.

William Powell has enhanced the understanding of the Buddha Dharma for Western readers with his exemplary translation and study of Tung-shan's great life. I am most thankful to him and to all others who made this publication possible.

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