

## Hakuin on Bodhichitta



For Hakuin, what was of primary importance was post-enlightenment training — the unending, untiring practice of “above, to seek enlightenment; below, to save all sentient beings.” Hakuin’s concern was not limited to zazen.

**Hakuin’s Itsumadegusa has the following passage:**

The most important thing is practice after enlightenment. What is “practice after enlightenment”? The primary aspect is bodhichitta. Long ago, it is said, the great kami of Kasuga Shrine spoke as follows to the sage Gedatsu of Kasagi: “Of all the sages and holy monks since the time of the Buddha Krakucchanda, those lacking bodhicitta have all fallen into the realm of the demons.” For long I wondered what these words meant... I pondered them from the age of twenty-five, and it was not until I reached forty-two that I unexpectedly perceived their meaning, as clearly as though they were in the palm of my hand. What is bodhicitta? It is the good practices of preaching the Dharma and benefiting others. Since then I have dedicated myself to turning the wheel of the Four Vows. Although I have now reached the age of eighty, I have never grown weary, and, if asked, I will gladly travel even fifty or a hundred leagues and preach the Dharma to the best of my ability.



Hakuin (1686-1769)

**The Kohiki uta has:**

What is “practice after enlightenment”?... This is a most important question.

The important thing in practice after enlightenment is bodhi...

Among all the sages and holy monks...

Those lacking bodhicitta have all fallen into the realm of the demons.

What sort of thing is bodhicitta? It is “above, to seek enlightenment; below, to save all sentient beings.”

It is to turn the wheel of the Four Vows and help other beings. For helping other beings teaching the Dharma is central.