CHAPTER FORTY-ONE (Dai yonjūissō 第四十一章)

Root Case1

第四十一祖、後同安大師、参前同安日、古人日、世人愛處我不愛。未審、如何是和尚愛處。同安日、既得恁麼。師於言下大悟。

The Forty-first Ancestor, the latter Great Master of Tongan,2 sought instruction from the former Tongan3 and asked: “An ancient said, ‘That which is desired by worldly people, I do not desire.’ I wonder what it is that you desire, Reverend?” Tongan said, “I have already attained ‘such.’” At these words, the Master [Guanzhi] greatly awakened.

1 Root Case (C. benze 本則; J. honsoku). The passage given here is a block of Chinese text, but only the quotation, “That which is desired by worldly people, I do not desire,” can be found in extant Chan/Zen texts that predate the Denkōroku, so the source that Keizan is quoting is unknown.

2 latter Great Master of Tongan (C. hou Tongan Dashi 後同安大師; J. go Dōan Dai-shi). A reference to Tongan Guanzhi 同安觀志 (J. Dōan Kanshi; d.u.), the Forty-first Ancestor of the Sōtō Lineage according to the Denkōroku. He is called the “latter” (C. hou 後; J. go) Tongan because his teacher was Chan Master Pi of Tongan, the Fortyeth Ancestor. Both were called “Tongan” because they both served as abbots of Tongan Monastery.

3 former Tongan (C. qian Tongan 前同安; J. zen Dōan). A reference to Chan Master Daopi of Tongan. He is called the “former” (C. qian 前; J. zen) Tongan because he served as abbot of Tongan Monastery before his dharma heir, Tongan Guanzhi, who is the subject of this chapter.

4 An ancient said, “That which is desired by worldly people, I do not desire” (C. guren yue, shiren ai chu wo bu ai 古人曰、世人愛處我不愛; J. koin iwaku, sejin no ai suru tokoro, ware ai sezu 古人口く、世人の愛する處、我れ愛せず). The “ancient” cited here is Shitou Xiqian (J. Sekitō Kisen; 700–790). The line “that which is desired by worldly people, I do not desire” comes from “Reverend Shitou’s Song of a Grass Hut Hermitage” (C. Shitou Heshang caoan ge 石頭和尚草庵歌; J. Sekitō Oshō shan ka), which is found in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame (T 2076.51.461c8-21) and several other Chan/Zen texts.

5 “I have already attained such” (C. ji de renmo 既得恁麼; J. sude ni inmo naru koto wo etari 既に恁麼なることを得たり). The word “such” (C. renmo 恡麼; J. inmo) has a double meaning in this sentence. In the first place, it stands for some unspecified thing that the former Tongan (Daopi) says he once desired, but has already attained. In the second place, it implies that Daopi has penetrated and accepted ultimate reality “such as it is,” which is beyond all conceptual constructs, and that he therefore has no desire for anything at all.
Pivotal Circumstances  【機縁】

師諱は觀志。 其行狀委く錄せず。 先同安に參じて得處深し。

The Master’s personal name was Guanzhi. The details of his biography are not recorded. He sought instruction from the first Tongan, and what he attained was profound.

先同安、 將に示寂せんとす。 上堂に曰く、 多子塔前宗子秀、 五老峰前事、 若何と。 是の如く三び擧するに未だ對る者あらず。 末後に師出て曰く、 夜明簾外排班立、 萬里歌謡道太平。 同安曰く、 須らく是れ驢漢にして得べし。

When the first Tongan was about to die,1 at a convocation in the dharma hall he [Daopi] said: “In front of the Stūpa of Many Sons an heir to the lineage2 flourished. What about the affair in front of Wulao Peak?”3 He [Daopi] raised the case three times like this,

1 When the first Tongan was about to die (sen Dōan, masa ni jijaku sen to su 先同安、 將に示寂せんとす). The block of text that begins with these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a nearly identical Chinese passage that appears in the Collated Essentials of the Five Flame Records under the heading “Chan Master Tongan Zhi of Hongzhou”:


2 heir to the lineage (C. zōngzi 宗子; J. shūshi). The reference here is to Mahākāśyapa, the First Ancestor of the Chan/Zen Lineage in India, who is said to have been recognized as sole heir to the lineage by Śākyamuni Buddha at the Stūpa of Many Sons.

3 affair in front of Wulao Peak (C. Wulao fēng qián shì 五老峰前事; J. Gorōhō zen no ji 五老峰前の事). This is a reference to a famous kōan, referred to in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame as the “phrases in front of Wulao Peak” (C. Wulao fēng juan 五老峰前の句; J. Gorōhō mae no ku 五老峰前の句), but known in the kōan collections Blue Cliff Record and Qingyi Record as “Yangshan asks a monk, ‘What place have you just departed from?’” It is clear from the following sentence that Daopi raised this old case in order to test his disciples, who were expected to comment on it. The parallelism of the two place names (“Stūpa of Many Sons” and “Wulao Peak”), which is suggested by the use of the postposition “in front of” (C. qiàn 前; J. mae) in conjunction with both of them, has led some scholars to assume that because the first alludes to the initial dharma transmission from Śākyamuni to Mahākāśyapa in India, the latter must somehow refer to the initial dharma transmission in China. Ishikawa (p. 695), accordingly, identifies Wulao Peak with Mount Song, where Bodhidharma transmitted the dharma to Huike, and Azuma (p. 695) follows suit, but this is not likely: Wulao Peak is located on Mount Lu in Jiangxi Province, while Mount Song is in Henan Province. The words “in front of Wulao Peak” refer to the kōan exchange
but still there was no one who replied. Finally, the Master [Guanzhi] came out and said:

Outside the luminous night curtain, they stand lined up in ranks; for ten thousand miles I sing a song, telling of great peace.

Tongan said, “It had to be this stupid ass who got it.”

After that, [Guanzhi] served as abbot of Tongan Monastery and was called the “latter Tongan.”

INVESTIGATION 【拈提】

between Yangshan Huiji and a monk who said he had just come from Mount Lu. The point of the first Tongan’s (Daopi’s) juxtaposition of the two place names seems to be that, just as Śākyamuni found an heir by holding up a flower, Daopi sought to find an heir by raising the kōan “affair in front of Wulao Peak.” In both stories, the entire audience is dumbfounded, but one lone disciple (Mahākāśyapa and Guanzhi, respectively) understands the Master’s intent, responds appropriately, and is recognized as heir.

1 came out and said (idete iwaku). That is, he “came out of the ranks” (C. chuban 出班; J. shutsuban). That is, he “came out of the ranks” (C. chuban 出班; J. shutsuban) and addressed him.

2 Outside the luminous night curtain, they stand lined up in ranks (C. ye ming lian wai pai ban li 夜明簾外排班立; J. yamyō rengai haiban shite tachi 夜明簾外排班して立ち). At a convocation in the dharma hall, it was standard procedure for the audience to line up in “two ranks” (C. liangban 兩班; J. ryōban), one on the east and the other on the west side of the hall, facing each other. The abbot sat on the high seat on the Sumeru altar (C. xumitan 須彌壇; J. shumidan) that was situated on the north side of the hall, facing south. To address the abbot, a member of the audience would “come out of the ranks” (C. chuban 出班; J. shutsuban) and stand in the center of the hall, facing north. This arrangement and ritual procedure mirrored that of the imperial court.

In this context, the expression “luminous night curtain” evidently refers to the seat and person of the abbot, who is metaphorically “curtained off” from the audience. → luminous night curtain.

3 I sing a song, telling of great peace (C. geyao dao taiping 歌謠道太平; J. kayō shite taibei wo iu 歌謠して太平を道う). Guanzhi must be referring to himself as the “singer” here, the one who has attained the great peace and thus can act freely, in contrast to the ranks of his fellow monks who were unable to respond to the kōan raised by the abbot Daopi.
Now, the phrase “in front of the Stūpa of Many Sons an heir to the lineage flourished” refers to the face-to-face encounter between Śākyamuni Buddha and Mahākāśyapa, which took place long ago before the Stūpa of Many Sons. In that single face-to-face encounter, the robe and dharma were together bequeathed. After that, [Mahākāśyapa] practiced the twelve austerities and later occupied a co-seat [with Śākyamuni]. At the nirvāna assembly, even though Mahākāśyapa was not present in the assembly, the entire congregation was entrusted to Mahākāśyapa [by Śākyamuni]. This is what [Tongan Daopi] meant when he said, “an heir to the lineage flourished.”

The current Great Master Tongan [Daopi], as the legitimate descendant of Dongshan, at this point went against the stream and overturned the house style of the entire house of Qingyuan. At the time of his display of extinction, in order to disclose his own legitimate heir, he said, “What about the affair in front of Wulao Peak?” He raised the case three times like this, but no one in the congregation understood, so everyone in the congregation failed to answer.

1 at the nirvāna assembly (neban e jō 涅槃會上). In the present context, this refers to the gathering at which, just before his death, the Buddha Śākyamuni preached the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. According to the early Chan record known as the *Baolin Biographies*, which cites the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra* itself as evidence, when the Buddha was about to enter nirvāna, Mahākāśyapa was off by himself in the Vaibhāra Cave on Vulture Peak. The Buddha announced to his leading disciples, “When Kāśyapa comes [after my death], have him proclaim and clarify the treasury of the true dharma eye” (Tanaka, 37-38).

2 went against the stream and overturned (gyakuryū honkai su 逆流翻回す). Azuma (p. 383, note s.v. 逆流翻回) says: “A powerful flow of water creates an eddy that flows backwards. In other words, a dharma heir in a later generation reactivates the tradition he belongs to.” This turns the original statement around to make it say that Daopi helped the house style of Qingyuan flourish, but it clearly indicates that Daopi’s teaching style was a radical departure from that of his predecessors in the lineage of Qingyuan. Of course, in the Chan/Zen view of dharma transmission, a change in the house style does not mean that the transmission is cut off, only that different ancestral teachers have different styles of teaching.
Mount Sumeru soars upwards, its peak surpassing the mountains congregated around it.\(^1\) The disc of the sun,\(^2\) shining brightly, illuminates the foremost [individual] in the herd of elephants.\(^3\) Therefore, [Guanzhi’s saying] “Outside the luminous night curtain, they stand lined up in ranks” meant that truly there was nobody who could match him. Because he [Guanzhi] had cast off body and relied on nothing, there was no one equal to him. Therefore, for “ten thousand miles,”\(^4\) even the slightest particle of dust was eliminated. Now where were those scheming ministers and fierce generals?\(^5\) He [Guanzhi] sang and sang, “Everywhere there is great peace!”\(^6\) He

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1 **its peak surpassing the mountains congregated around it** (shusan no itadaki hiide 衆山の頂秀で). The literature of Buddhism contains many examples of this comparison. The *Increased by One Āgama Sūtra*, for example, says that the body of the Buddha exceeds all others in its adornment, “Just as Mount Sumeru towers over the mountains congregated around it” (猶須彌山出衆山上; T 125.2.664a3). The *Lotus Sūtra* says: “Among the mountains congregated around it, Mount Sumeru is number one; this *Lotus Sūtra* is also like that” (衆山之中、須彌山為第一、此法華經亦復如是; T 262.9.54a22-23). In the present context, it is Guanzhi who is extolled as the outstanding member of the congregation (shu 衆) assembled in the dharma hall, just as Mount Sumeru is the highest among the “congregated mountains” (shusan 衆山).

2 **disc of the sun** (C. *rilun* 日輪; J. *nichirin*). The poetic name for the sun also refers, more specifically, to the exterior of the sun palace of Sūrya (C. *Ritian* 日天; J. *Nit ten*), the solar deity, which is said to consist of fiery crystal. It invokes the luminous night curtain, which is also made of crystal and is associated with the seat of royalty. The “sun” thus represents the abbot Daopi on his high seat, who “shines” his favor on Guanzhi.

3 **foremost in the herd of elephants** (gunzō no mae 群象の前). Buddhist sūtras (especially early ones of Indian origin, such as the *Middle Length Āgama Sūtra*; T 26.1.536a7-13) often use the example of a dominant elephant who leads a “herd of elephants” (C. *qunxiang* 群象; J. *gunzō*), or leaves the herd behind and goes off alone, as a metaphor for an exceptional person.

4 **“ten thousand miles”** (C. *wanli* 萬里; J. *banri*). This is a quotation of Guanzhi’s preceding words, “for ten thousand miles I sing a song, telling of great peace.”

5 **scheming ministers and fierce generals** (C. *mouchen mengjiang* 謀臣猛將; J. *bojin mōshō*). In the Chinese imperial court, the “two ranks” (C. *liangban* 兩班; J. *ryōban*) that lined up on the east and west sides of the hall for an audience with the emperor were the civil officials (C. *wenguan* 文官; J. *bunkan*) and military officers (C. *wuguan* 武官; J. *bukan*), respectively. Thus, the somewhat unflattering mention of “scheming ministers and fierce generals” here is an allusion to the “two ranks” of monks lined up for the convocation in the dharma hall, all of whom were dumbfounded. Only Guanzhi was able to “come out of the ranks” (C. *chuban* 出班; J. *shutsuban*) and speak freely.

6 **“Everywhere there is great peace!”** (mina taihei nari 皆太平なり). There is a double meaning here. If “everywhere” (mina 皆, or more literally, “everyone [in the world]”) is at great peace, then the “scheming ministers and fierce generals” of the imperial court
was an extraordinary patch-robed one! Only when students arrive at this standpoint will they be able to get it.

Behavior like this, which set him [Guanzhi] apart from the crowd and entailed outstanding attainments, was evident in his manner from early on. Thus he said: “That which is desired by worldly people, I do not desire. I wonder what it is that you desire, Reverend?” What is spoken of here as “that which is desired by worldly people” refers to loving oneself and loving others.¹ This love gradually increases. In short, people desire secondary karmic recompense, and they desire primary karmic recompense. This desire becomes an ever deeper attachment as time goes on, as people pile one set of iron shackles on top of another, even loving buddhas and loving ancestors. In this manner, they become ever more sullied by the stain of desire as time goes on. In the end, functioning as the karmic cause that fetters living beings, that [stain of desire] cannot be eradicated. Basically, they are born from a place that lacks freedom, and when they die and move on, it is toward a place that lacks freedom. This process depends solely on that desire. At root, it is the desire of attachment to signs such as “ordinary beings and buddhas,” “men and women,” and “sentient beings and insentient things.” You should quickly sweep it away.

¹ loving oneself and loving others (mizukara ai shi wo ai su 自ら愛し他を愛す).

This may also be translated “being attached to oneself and being attached to others.” In this passage, the word ai 愛 is translated as “desire,” “love,” or “attachment,” depending on context, but whichever English word is used, the reader should understand that all three meanings are intended.
When there are no guidelines whatsoever, and “there is not a single thing,” this is not to discriminate what anything is. [However,] when there is no knowing and no being conscious, then this is having non-marks as an object of desire. You must not dwell in that. If you are still attached to things that have marks, if you but once arouse the thought of bodhi, there is the possibility of spontaneously penetrating the essence. But if you cling to the viewpoint of non-marks and get reborn in the formless realm, then regrettably, after passing some number of kalpas, when your lifespan in heaven is exhausted, you will fall into Avīci Hell. This is what is called mindlessness, or the extinction of ideation. Whether they have marks or lack marks, repeatedly these are the object of desire of worldly people.

1 lifespan in heaven (C. tianshou 天壽; J. tenju). The heaven referred to is the heaven of non-ideation, the highest of the heavens in the formless realm. Beings are said to be born there as the karmic result of practicing the highest of the four formless concentrations and then entering the trance of cessation, also called the extinction of ideation, which is mistakenly equated by some misguided practitioners with nirvāṇa. The “lifespan” (C. shou 寿; J. ju) of a being in any heaven is extremely long by human standards (enough to appear as a virtual immortality), but it does eventually come to an end.

2 This (kore 是れ). The antecedent of “this” is the viewpoint of non-marks (hisō no shoken 非相の所見) spoken of just above.

3 mindlessness (C. wushin 無心; J. mushin; S. acittaka). At some places in the Denkōroku (and elsewhere in the Chan/Zen tradition), the expression no-mind (C. wushin 無心; J. mushin) is used in a positive sense to indicate freedom from attachment to deluded conceptual constructs, which allows for spontaneous and skillful activity. In the present context, however, “mindlessness” refers to a spiritual dead-end associated with the “concentration without ideation” (C. wuxiang ding 無想定; J. musō jō; S. asamjñā-samāpatti), which some people mistakenly equate with nirvāṇa. Access to the “concentration without ideation” is said to be available only to practitioners who have attained the highest of the four dhyānas. → mindlessness.

4 extinction of ideation (C. miexiang 滅想; J. messō). This refers to the “concentration in which ideation is extinguished” (C. miexiang ding 滅想定; J. messō jō), which is a synonym of “trance of cessation.” Access to the trance of cessation is said to be available only to practitioners who have attained the highest of the four formless concentrations. Some early Indian Buddhist texts that were translated into Chinese contain the vestigial suggestion that the trance of cessation is equivalent to nirvāṇa, which would imply that one could attain final liberation through the practice of trance alone, without gaining any insight or wisdom. That position, however, was emphatically rejected in Indian texts that became orthodox even before the transmission of Buddhism to China. The argument presented here in the Denkōroku, which is that trance meditation without the cultivation of wisdom is a dead end, represents that orthodoxy. → trance of cessation.
While in the midst of having marks, one sees self and sees others. While in the midst of lacking marks, self is forgotten and others are forgotten. All of this is false.

Therefore, Zen worthies, beginners, and latecomer students, as descendents of Śākya the Honored One, you have the great good fortune to receive and use what the Buddha received and used. How could that possibly be the same as the object of desire of worldly people? First, you must become liberated from all false views of discriminating between “is or is not,” good and evil, and men and women. Then, you must not dwell in the place of signless quiescence, where there is no purpose and nothing matters.

If you wish to accede to this place, do not turn toward others to seek it, or face outside to look for it. You must face what is prior to having received this body — what was there even before the sprouting of your physical body1 — and fix your eyes intimately on that. In it, most certainly, there should not be the sprouting of even a hair’s-breadth of discrimination concerning myriads of things. [However,] you must not become like the “cave of demons under the Black Mountains,” where all is dark and utterly obscure. This mind originally has a sublime clarity, which shines brightly and is not obscure. This mind is wide open, and it illuminates completely. Within it, in the final analysis, there is not an iota of any involvement with skin, flesh, bone, or marrow. How, then, could there possibly be [involvement with] the six sense faculties and six sense objects, or delusion and awakening, or defilement and purity?

1 before the sprouting of your physical body (kono karada imada kizasazarisbi izen 此體未だ萌さざりし以前). The verb to “sprout” (kizasu 萌さす) usually refers to the germination of seeds, but here it indicates what in English is called “conception” in the biological sense: the starting point in the growth of a fetus that will develop into a fully formed human body. This is a Japanese gloss of an expression coined by Hongzhi Zhengjue 宏智正覚 (J. Wanshi Shōgaku; 1091–1157). → “what is prior to your physical body.”
The Buddha does not preach for your sake, and you yourself do not seek instruction for the sake of a master. It is not simply that [in this mind] there is no division of sound and form, but that [this mind] is not equipped with ears and eyes. Nevertheless, the mind-moon shines, fully clear. Eye flowers blossom, their patterns beautiful. You must fully arrive, meticulously, and then be in accord with “such.”

Zen worthies, how can you gain an understanding of this principle? Shall I attach a saying in your stead? Quickly, you must fix your eyes on “what is prior to your physical body.”

1 The Buddha does not preach for your sake, and you yourself do not seek instruction for the sake of a master (Hotoke, nanji ga tame ni toku koto naku, mizukara shi no tame ni sanzuru nashi 仏、汝が為に説くことなく、自ら師の為に参ずるなし). The first part of this statement seems odd because the preaching of the Buddha is usually said to be for the sake of saving all living beings. Ishikawa (p. 705) relates it to the assertion that “throughout his forty-nine year career of preaching, the Buddha never actually spoke a word” (shijūkunen ichiji fusetsu 四十九年一字不説). Case #28 of the Blue Cliff Record, for example, says:

Old Śākya appeared in the world, and for forty-nine years he never spoke a single word.... Actually the ancestors and buddhas, from ancient times until now, have never yet preached for people.

《碧巖錄》釋迦老子出世。四十九年。未曾説一字.... 其實祖佛。自古至今。不曾為人説。（T 2003.48.168c14... c21-22).

However, the two parts of the statement are paired and meant to be read in parallel. Thus, another implication is that, just as students seek instruction from a master for their own sakes and not that of the master, the Buddha’s preaching was for the sake of self.

2 in your stead (kawatte 代て). In the discourse records of Chan/Zen masters, when members of the audience are unable to respond to a question or challenge that he poses, the master often answers for them, or “in their stead” (C. dai 代; J. kawari ni 代わりに).

3 “what is prior to your physical body” (C. tiqian 體前; J. taizen). This expression comes from the Extensive Record of Chan Master Hongzhi. Earlier in this chapter the same concept is glossed in Japanese as: “You must face what is prior to having received this body — what was there even before the sprouting of your physical body” (kono karada imada kizasazarishi izen 此體未だ萌さざりし以前). → “what is prior to your physical body.”
**VERSE ON THE OLD CASE**

心月眼華光色好。放開劫外有誰覓。
Mind-moon and eye flowers: their illumination and colors are beautiful.
Radiating and blossoming outside the kalpas, who is there to play with them?