CHAPTER FORTY-TWO (Dai yonjūni shō 第四十二章)

Root Case1【本則】

第四十二祖、梁山和尚、参侍後同安。同安曰、如何是衲衣下事。師無對。安曰、學佛、未到這箇田地最苦、汝問我道。師問、如何是衲衣下事。安曰、密。師乃大悟。


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1 Root Case (C. benze 本則; J. honsoku). The passage given here is a block of Chinese text, but it is not found in any extant Chan/Zen texts that predate the Denkôroku, so its provenance is unknown. It may have been pieced together by Keizan himself, drawing on the phrases “not yet reached this standpoint” and “matter for those in patched robes,” which do appear in earlier Chinese records.

2 Reverend Liangshan (C. Liangshan Heshang 梁山和尚; J. Ryōzan Oshō). Liangshan Yuanguan 梁山緣觀 (J. Ryōzan Enkan; d.u.).

3 latter Tongan (C. hou Tongan 後同安). A reference to Chan Master Tongan Guanzhi, the Forty-first Ancestor of the Chan/Zen Lineage according to the Denkôroku. He is called the “latter” (C. hou 後; J. go) Tongan because his teacher was Chan Master Daopi of Tongan, the Fortieth Ancestor. Both were called “Tongan” because they both served as abbots of Tongan Monastery.

4 “What about the ‘matter for those in patched robes’?” (C. ruhe shi nayi xia shi 如何是衲衣下事; J. ika naru ka kore nōe ka no ji 如何なるか是れ衲衣下の事). The phrase “matter for those in patched robes” is raised as a kōan in a great many Chan/Zen discourse records.


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Pivotal Circumstances 【機縁】

师は何れの許の人と云ことを知らず。諱は縁觀。後の同安に参じ執侍すること四歳、衣鉢侍者に充つ。同安、有時、上堂、早参衣法衣を挂くべし。時到て師納法衣を捧ぐ。同安、法衣を取る次で問て曰く、如何が是れ衲衣下の事。師無对。乃至、師乃ち大悟す。礼拜して感涙に衣を湿ほす。安曰く、汝既に大悟す。又道ひ得るや。師曰く、縁観、便ち道ひ得ん。安曰く、如何が是れ衲衣下の事。師曰く、密。安、示して曰く、密有密有。

As for the Master Liangshan, what the background of the man was is not known. His personal name was Yuanguan. He sought instruction from the latter Tongan and waited on him for four years in the role of robe-and-bowl acolyte. At one time, when there was to be a convocation in the dharma hall and an early morning gathering in advance of it, Tongan needed to don his patchwork dharma robe. When the time came, the Master Liangshan respectfully presented the patchwork dharma robe, holding it up with both hands. After Tongan took the robe, he asked, “What about the ‘matter for those in patched robes’?” The Master Liangshan had no response. ...and so on, down to... greatly awakened. He Liangshan made prostrations, and tears of joy wet his robes. Tongan said, “You have already greatly awakened. Are you now able to speak?” The Master Liangshan said, “I, Yuanguan, am now able to speak.” Tongan said, “What about the ‘matter for those in patched robes’?” The Master Liangshan said, “Secret.” Tongan said, “Secret being, secret being.”

1 convocation in the dharma hall and an early morning gathering (C. shangtang, zaosan 上堂、早参; J. jōdō, sōsan). These are two different events in the life of a monastery, both of which are led by the abbot, who must dress formally and don a kāśāya. According to the Rules of Purity for Chan Monasteries:

If there is going to be a public convocation in the dharma hall, there should not be a cancellation of the early morning gathering following the morning gruel.

《禪苑清規》如遇公界上堂。早參粥罷不放參。（CBETA, X63, no. 1245, p. 127, a18-19 // Z 2:16, p. 443, a3-4 // R111, p. 885, a3-4）

A “public” (C. gongjie 公界; J. kugai) convocation in the dharma hall was one attended by lay patrons and officials who came from outside a monastery. An abbot might need to consult with his closest disciples in the early morning gathering to make sure that all the guests were properly greeted and attended to.

2 and so on, down to (naishi 乃至). This expression indicates that part of this repetition of the Root Case has been elided to save space, but that the intention is to quote the entire thing.

3 “secret being” (C. miyou 密有; J. mitsu’i). In the biography of “Chan Master Yuanguan of Mount Liang in Langzhou” in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame, it is Liangshan himself who replies, “Secret being is starting to show” when
**INVESTIGATION【拈提】**

From that time on, adapting to abilities, the Master [Liangshan] often spoke of “secret being.” After he became abbot, student trainees frequently asked about the “matter for those in patched robes.” At one time, a student trainee asked, “What about the ‘matter for those in patched robes’?” The Master [Liangshan] said, “Even all the sages cannot reveal it.”

**Also, at one time, a student trainee**

asked, “When it is difficult to ward off domestic thieves, what some unidentified interlocutor asks, “What about the ‘matter for those in patched robes?’”:

In the Collated Essentials of the Five Flame Records under the heading “Chan Master Yuanguan of Mount Liang in Dingzhou”:

1 asked (tou 問ぶ). The question and answer that begins with this word is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of an identical Chinese passage that appears in the Collated Essentials of the Five Flame Records under the heading “Chan Master Yuanguan of Mount Liang in Dingzhou”:

2 asked (tou 問ぶ). The question and answer that begins with this word 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 Yuanguan of Mount Liang in Dingzhou”:

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then?” The Master [Liangshan] said, “If you are conscious of them, they will not harm you.” [The student] said, “After becoming conscious of them, what then?” The Master [Liangshan] said, “Exile them to the country of non-arising.” [The student] said, “But is that not a place where they can hide and fulfill their natural destiny?” The Master [Liangshan] said, “Dead water does not conceal dragons.” [The student] said, “What about a dragon in living water?” The Master [Liangshan] said, “It stirs up waves, but does not make large billows.” [The student] said, “When it suddenly drains lakes and topples peaks, what then?” The Master [Liangshan] came down from his seat, grabbed hold [of the student] and said, “Do not get the corner of this old monk’s kāśāya wet!”

Another time, [someone] asked, “What about ‘this student’s own self?’” The Master [Liangshan] said, “Within the imperial domain, the son of heaven; beyond the borders, generals.”

In this manner, he [Liangshan] thoroughly demonstrated this “secret being” for the sake of others.

又有一時

問ふ、如何が是れ學人の自己。師曰く、寰中は天子、塞外は將軍。

[someone] asked, “What about ‘this student’s own self?’” The Master [Liangshan] said, “Within the imperial domain, the son of heaven; beyond the borders, generals.”

是の如く他の為にせる、悉く是れ密有を呈似す。

In this manner, he [Liangshan] thoroughly demonstrated this “secret being” for the sake of others.

適來の因縁に曰く、學佛未だ這箇の田地に到らず、最も苦なりと。實なる哉、此言。設ひ定坐牀を破り精進疲を忘れ、高行梵行の人なりとも、若し未だ這箇の田地に到らずば、尚ほ三界牢獄出で難し。四辨を具し八音を具して、巧説霧の如く起り、口業海の如飜へり、說法天地を驚して、華を雨らし石を動すとも、若し末だ這の田地に到らずんば、閻羅老子言多きことを恐れず。設ひ日久しく月深く修行して、念盡き情鎭まりて、形枯木の如く心死灰の如くにして、一切時に於て境に逢ても心起らず、事に觸るとも

“fulfill their natural destiny” (C. liming 立命; J. ritsumei). An expression that, according to Mencius, implies “not ruining the original nature endowed from heaven, and to proceed without doubt or fear” (DDB, s.v. 立命). It is used ironically here, for the “natural destiny” (C. ming 命; J. mei) of a thief is to steal.

2 asked (tou 問ふ). The question and answer that begins with this word is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of an identical Chinese passage that appears in the Collated Essentials of the Five Flame Records under the heading “Chan Master Yuanguan of Mount Liang in Dingzhou”:

《五燈會元》問。如何是學人自己。師曰、寰中天子、塞外將軍。(CBETA, X80, no. 1565, p. 286, c7-8 // Z 2B:11, p. 260, a4-5 // R138, p. 519, a4-5).
In the aforementioned episode it is said: “In studying buddha, to have ‘not yet reached this standpoint’ is the greatest suffering.”¹ So true, these words! Even if you wear out your seat on the meditation platform, forget exhaustion in your vigor, and are a person of lofty behavior and pure conduct, if you have “not yet reached this standpoint,” it will still be difficult to escape the prison of the three realms. Even if you are equipped with the four abilities of unhindered articulation and eight vocal attributes such that your skillful preaching arises like mist, your verbal actions emanate like waves in the ocean, your dharma preaching startles heaven and earth, and you cause flowers to rain down and stones to move, if you have “not yet reached this standpoint,” then Old Yama will not be frightened to hear your many words. Let us suppose that you were to practice for days that are long and months that are deep, such that your thought was exhausted and your feelings were calmed, making your body like a withered tree and your mind like dead ashes. And let us suppose that at all times, even when you encountered sense objects, your mind would not give rise to thoughts; and that even when you came into contact with external affairs, your mindfulness would remain free from agitation. Even if you were liberated while sitting, or died while standing, or seemed to have attained autonomy and freedom with respect to birth and death, if you still had “not yet reached this standpoint,” then you would not be functioning within the house of the buddhas and ancestors. Thus, an ancient said,² “Our predecessors all regarded this matter as the single great matter.”

¹ “In studying buddha, to have ‘not yet reached this standpoint’ is the greatest suffering” (gakubutsu imada shako no denchi ni itarazaru, mottomo ku nari 學佛未だ這箇の田地に到らず、最も苦なり). This quote is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of the same line that appears in Chinese in the Root Case.

² an ancient said (kojin iwaku 古人曰く). The source of the following quotation is unknown.
asked a monk,1 “In this world, what thing is the greatest suffering?” The monk replied, “Hell is the greatest suffering.” Dongshan said: “Not so. To be under the threads of this robe2 and not clarify the great matter is called the greatest suffering.”

此門人雲居角立す。乃ち此因縁を擧して曰く、

His [Dongshan’s] follower Yunju was a standout. He raised this episode, saying:3

先師道く、地獄未だ是れ苦ならず。此事線下にして大事を明たると、却て是れ最苦なりと。汝等、乃至、更に子の精彩をはせば便ち是らなたに。上座平生の行脚に居せず。叢林に辜負す。古人曰く、此事を保任することを得んと欲せば、須らく高高たる山頂に立ち、深深たる海底に往て、方にある子の気息あるべし。汝、若し大事未だ辨ぜずば、且つ須らく玄途に履踐すべし。

1 asked a monk (C. wen seng 問僧; J. sō ni tou 僧に問ふ). The question and answer that begins with these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a nearly identical Chinese passage that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Chan Master Liangjie of Mount Dong in Junzhou”:

《景德傳燈錄》師問僧。世間何物最苦。僧曰。地獄最苦。師曰。不然。曰師意如何。師曰。在此衣線下不明大事。却是最苦。汝等既在這箇行流。十分去九。不較多也更著些子精彩。便是上座不屈平生行脚。不孤負叢林。古人道。欲得保任此事。須向高高山頂立。深深海底行。方有些子氣息。汝若大事未辦。且須履踐玄逓。此事線下不明大事。是名最苦。(T 2076.51.323a19-21).

This question and answer also appears in the Discourse Record of Chan Master Wuben of Mount Dong in Junzhou (T 1986A.47.511c19-21) and various other Chan records.

2 threads of this robe (C. ci yixian 此衣線; J. kono esen). According to ZGDJ (99b, s.v. えせんか), the expression “robe threads” (C. yixian 衣線; J. esen) is a synonym for dharma robe (C. fayi 法衣; J. hōe). The expression does seem to have that meaning here, but it is an unusual one that occurs only in this quotation attributed to Dongshan; it is not attested anywhere else in the Chinese Buddhist canon or in dictionaries of ordinary Chinese. Thus, it remains unclear exactly what the force of the word “thread” (C. xian 線; J. sen) is when juxtaposed with “robe” (C. yi 衣; J. e).

3 saying (iwaku 曰く). The quoted block of text that follows this word 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 Yunju Daoying of Hongzhou”:

《五燈會元》先師道。地獄未是苦。向此衣線下不明大事。却是最苦。師曰。汝等既在這箇行流。十分去九。不較多也更著些子精彩。便是上座不屈平生行脚。不孤負叢林。古人道。欲得保任此事。須向高高山頂立。深深海底行。方有些子氣息。汝若大事未辦。且須履踐玄逓。(CBETA, X80, no. 1565, p. 266, e21-p. 267, a2 // Z 2B:11, p. 240, b2-7 // R138, p. 479, b2-7).

The words that are set in a more angular font show the part of the Chinese original that is elided in the Japanese transcription, as indicated by the expression “and so on, down to” (naishi 乃至).
“My late master [Dongshan] said, ‘Hell is not yet this [greatest] suffering. To be under the threads of this robe and not clarify the great matter is, rather, the greatest suffering.’ All of you ...and so on, down to...¹ If you put a little more vitality into it, that will do it. Senior seats, do not be discouraged about pilgrimaging throughout your life. Do not turn your back on major monasteries. An ancient said,² ‘If you wish to take responsibility for this matter, then you must stand on the peaks of the highest mountain and walk on the bottom of the deepest sea.’ Only then will you have a little breath of life. If you have not yet discerned the great matter, then you must actually tread the hidden path.”

¹ and so on, down to (naishi 乃至). This expression indicates that part of the quotation of the original Chinese (given in the previous note) has been elided to save space, but that the intention is to quote the entire thing. The elided portion (set in non-serif / more angular font) reads:

All of you are already within this “moving and flowing.” You are nine-tenths of the way there; there is not too much more to go.

² An ancient said (C. guren dao 古人道; J. kōjin iwaku 古人曰く). The quotation that follows is found in the biography of “Chan Master Weiyan of Mount Yao in Lizhou” in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame (T 2076.51.312b20-21). It is attributed to Y aoshan W eiyan 藥山惟儼 (J. Yakusan Igen; 745–828) in other Chan records, as well, so he must be the “ancient” referred to.

³ chapter-opening section on the five buddhas (gobutsu no kaishō 五佛の開章). The reference is to Chapter 2 of the Lotus Sūtra, entitled “Skillful Means” (C. fangbian 方便; J. hōben), a part of which is called (in Chinese Tiantai and Japanese Tendai school commentaries) the “five buddhas section” (C. wufo zhang 五佛章; J. gobutsu shō). The designation comes from the fact that the text repeats, five times, the claim that all buddhas teach the “one buddha vehicle” (C. yi fosṣeru 一佛乗; J. ichi butsujō), as follows: (1) “all buddhas, the tathāgatas” (C. zhufo rulai 諸佛如来; J. shobutsu nyorai) teach
says: “All buddhas, world-honored ones, appear in the world only for the cause of a single great matter.” That is to say, [all buddhas appear in the world] to cause the “opening, indicating, awakening, and entering” of buddha-knowledge. To immediately clarify this singular “cause of a great matter” [spoken of in the Lotus Sūtra] is what [Dongshan] meant by the “great matter.”

Do not delight in pointlessly imitating disciples of the Buddha. If you have not clarified this matter, then in the final analysis, how are you different from a secular person who is a householder? If you ask what the reason is, it is because the way your eyes see forms does not differ, and the way your ears hear sounds, too, is not changed [from theirs]. This is not just a matter of how you face objects of cognition externally, but also of your inability to free yourself from thoughts about objects that arise internally. You have just changed your appearance [from that of a secular person]; ultimately you are no different. Ultimately, when both your eyes close at your last breath, your spirit will uselessly follow things and be transformed, the one buddha vehicle (T 262.9a29-b4); (2) “all buddhas of the past” (C. guo chu zhufo 過去諸佛; J. kako shobutsu) teach it (ibid. 7b4-7); (3) “all buddhas of the future” (C. weilai zhufo 未來諸佛; J. mirai shobutsu), teach it (ibid. 7b7-11); (4) “all buddhas, world-honored ones... of the present” (C. xianzai...zhufo shizun 現在...諸佛世尊; J. genzai... shobutsu seson) teach it (ibid. 7b11-18); and (5) Śākyamuni Buddha himself teaches it, saying, “I now also [teach] like this” (C. wo jin yifu rushi 我今亦復如是; J. ga kon yifu rushi 我今亦復如是; ibid. 7b18-22). In his Essay on Defending the Borders of the Country, Saichō 最澄 (766–822), founder of the Tendai School in Japan, explains:

[This doctrine] exists in the “five buddhas section”: first are the buddhas of the ten directions; second are the buddhas of the past; third are the buddhas of the present; fourth are the buddhas of the future; and fifth is Śākyamuni Buddha.

《守護國界章》有五佛章故。一者十方佛。二者過去佛。三者未來佛。四者現在佛。五者釋迦佛。（T 2362.74.203c14–16）

1 says (とと). The quotation of Śākyamuni Buddha that follows is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a line in Chinese that appears in Chapter 2 of the Lotus Sūtra, entitled “Skillful Means” (C. fangbian 方便; J. bōben):

《妙法蓮華經》諸佛世尊唯以一大事因緣故出現於世。（T 262.9.7a21-22）

For a translation of the entire passage in which this line occurs, → single great matter.
and you will continuously flow through the three realms. Even if it seems
that you have just enough good karma to be born among humans or born
in a heaven, the wheel [of birth and death] looks to be turning around and
around without end.

What is the reason behind the [Buddha’s] fundamental intention in hav-
ing people leave the life of a householder and go beyond worldly toil? It is
only for the sake of having them penetrate buddha-knowledge. Taking the
trouble to establish major monasteries and gather the fourfold assembly
is only for the sake of shedding light on this matter. It is for this reason
that sangha halls are named “buddha-selection sites,” and [some people]
are called elders and regarded as instructing masters. It is not for the pur-
pose of arbitrarily gathering a congregation and making a lot of loud talk.
It is only for the sake of making people fully shed light on their own selves.

Therefore, even if you take on the appearance of one who has gone forth
from household life, and you half-heartedly associate with others in major
monasteries, if you have not clarified this matter, your exertions are futile
and simply have no merit. That is all the more true of latecomer students
with beginners’ abilities in this evil age of the latter era. Even if they try to
learn bodily etiquette and mental restraint in accordance with the rules
set by previous buddhas, being naturally perverse, they are unable to mas-
ter those. Monks these days are not moderate in the way they settle their
hands and put down their feet. They do not try to learn anything of the
major and minor aspects of deportment, or of the inward and outward
techniques of mind. Thus, it is as if they lack monkish deportment. Even
supposing that your bodily etiquette and mental restraint are like those of
old, if you have not clarified the mind-ground, it is contaminated karma
that results in the superior rewards of [rebirth among] humans or gods. How much worse would it be if, with the mind-ground not clarified and your bodily etiquette not regulated, you recklessly accepted the alms of the faithful! Everyone like that is of the type that falls into hell.

然れども先徳曰く、

However, a previous worthy said:

世下り人疎にして、設ひ身儀心操古聖の如くなくとも、精細綿密にして一大事を明らめ得ば、恐らくは三世諸佛と差ふること無からん。六代祖宗、歴代古聖、悉く兄弟ならん。本より三界の出づべきなし。豈六道の廻るべきあらんやと。

“As the ages decline and people become coarse, even if they lack the bodily etiquette and mental restraint of the sort that the old sages had, if they are able to clarify the single great matter, attentively and thoroughly, then there is a chance that there will be no difference between them and the buddhas of the three times. They should all be brother disciples in the lineage of the six generations of ancestors and the successive generations of old sages. Fundamentally, there is no need to escape from the three realms; how, then, could there be any necessity of revolving through the six destinies?”

然れば精細に功夫し綿密に参学して、衲衣下の事を明らむべし。此一大事因縁、正像末の時隔てなく、直実和、園異ならず。故に末法悪世と悲むこと勿れ。遠方邊地の人と嫌ふこと勿れ。

1 a previous worthy said (sentoku iwaku 先徳曰く). These words introduce what is ostensibly a quotation of an eminent Chan/Zen master of yore. The quotation looks like it could be a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a passage that was originally in Chinese, similar to the many other transcriptions that occur in the Denkōroku. However, a digital search of the Chinese Buddhist canon, targeting all of the various compounds of Chinese characters that appear in the quotation, turns up no source text.

2 As the ages decline (yo kudari 世下り). The original Japanese here could also mean “as the generations (se 世) go by (kudari 下り).” There is no external philological evidence that might help to determine which of these meanings is intended, but the immediate context points to the former, because the text below speaks of the true, semblance, and enfeebled ages of the dharma, a concept which (among other things) envisions a progressive decline in the quality of the monastic sangha.

3 six generations of ancestors (roku dai so 六代祖). The reference is to the first six generations of Chan masters in China, from Bodhidharma down to Huineng, to whom all living Chan/Zen masters in Keizan’s day traced back their lineage of dharma inheritance.
Therefore, you must attentively make a concentrated effort, thoroughly study, and clarify the “matter for those in patched robes.” When it comes to the “cause of a single great matter,” there is no division into true, semblance, and enfeebled times. There is no difference between the countries of India, China, and Japan. Therefore, do not rue that this is the evil age of the enfeebled dharma. Do not hate that you are a person in a far-off peripheral land.

This matter, from the start, is such that if the thousand buddhas came and vied to give it to you, even their buddha-power, in the end, would not be up to the task. Thus, it is not a way that is given to a child, and it is not a way that is received from a father. It can only be attained by oneself, in one’s own person, through self-cultivation and self-awakening. Cultivation may go on for infinite kalpas as numerous as motes of dust, but self-verification and self-awakening will occur in the space of a single instant. If you once apply the force of an intense effort, there will not be an iota of anything to attain in all of heaven and earth. If you once arrive at this place, you will no longer suffer from the blind ignorance of bygone kalpas, vast and great. How could the buddhas have anything to give you?

Thus, if you think you would like to arrive at this place in detail, first you must discard your myriad affairs. Furthermore, you must not seek the sphere of cognition of the buddhas and ancestors. How much less, then, there will not be an iota of anything to attain. This statement is made from the standpoint of awakening, which realizes the emptiness of all dharmas. Thus, the meaning of the sentence in which it occurs is: if you make a great effort to attain awakening, you will succeed in attaining it, which consists of the realization that there is nothing to attain. The “sphere of cognition of the buddhas and ancestors” is precisely the goal of Chan/Zen practice.
should you have hate or love for self or other? When even a hair’s-breadth of intellectual interpretation arises, take a look directly beneath it. There is definitely something there that lacks skin or flesh. The substance, like empty space, has no separate form. It is just like the complete clarity of pure water. Expansive and obvious, it is perfectly complete knowing; that is all.

Now then, speak! How is it possible to bare this principle?

VERSE ON THE OLD CASE 【頌古】

水清徹底深沈處。不待琢磨自瑩明。
When the water is pure, one penetrates to the bottom, a deeply sunken place. Without waiting to be cut and polished, it is clear and bright of itself.

However, to actively “seek” (motomuru 求むる) such a thing or state of being is to hypostasize it, which ipso facto involves deluded conceptual thinking. Hence there is the admonition not to seek it.