CHAPTER THIRTY (Dai sanjusshō 第三十章)

ROOT CASE 【本則】

第三十祖、鑒智大師、参二十九祖、問曰、

The Thirtieth Ancestor, Great Master Jianzhi, went to inquire of the Twenty-ninth Ancestor [Huike] and asked:2

弟子身纏風恙、請和尚懺罪。祖曰、將罪來、與汝懺。師良久曰、罪不可得。祖曰、我與汝懺罪竟。宜依佛法僧住。

“Your disciple’s [i.e. my] body is afflicted with a contagious disease. Please, Reverend, help me repent my sins.” The Ancestor [Huike] said, “Bring me your sins, and I will allow you repentance.” The Master [Sengcan] paused for a long while and then

1 Great Master Jianzhi (C. Jianzhi Dashi 鑒智大師; J. Kanchi Daishi). This is the posthumous honorary title of Sengcan (J. Sōsan), the Third Ancestor of the Chan/Zen Lineage in China.

2 asked (C. wenyue 問曰; J. toite iwaku 問て曰く). The block of Chinese text that follows these words is nearly identical to a passage that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Twenty-ninth Ancestor, Great Master Huike” (T 2076.51.220c16-18).

3 contagious disease (C. fengyang 風恙; J. fūyō). In Keizan’s commentary later in this chapter, he identifies the disease as leprosy (C. laibing 癩病; J. raibyō). However, in the original Chinese this term is used in a far looser sense to indicate any kind of illness, including the flu or common cold (C. fengxie 風邪; J. kaze). In general, the glyph yang 息 (J. yō) can indicate any kind of physical “illness” or mental “anxiety.” The glyph feng 風 (J. fū), literally “wind,” when it is used in the context of illness, suggests that the cause of the problem is exposure to some kind of unhealthy “vapors” or “humors,” or to negative spiritual “influences.” Because it implies infection by contact, it is translated here as “contagious.”

4 “Please, Reverend, help me repent my sins” (C. qing Heshang chanzui 請和尚懺罪; J. kōraku wa Oshō chan zu), the wording here makes it seem as if the Reverend Huike is being asked to “absolve the sins” of Sengcan, but the Buddhist tradition has no sacerdotal function in which only the priest acts and the sinner is the passive recipient of absolution. What Sengcan is asking Huike to do, as we know from the Tenjun text of the Treatise on the Two Entrances and Four Practices, is “perform a rite of repentance for your disciple” (C. yu dizi chanhuifa 與弟子懺悔法; J. deshi no tame ni sangehō wo su 弟子の與めに懺悔法をす). The priest leads the rite, but it is up to the sinner to actively recite words of repentance to make the procedure effective.

5 I will allow you repentance C. yu ru chan 與汝懺; J. nanji no tame ni san ze 汝の與めに懺せよ). That is to say, “I will perform the rite of repentance (C. chanhuifa 懺悔法; J. sangehō) for you.”
said, “I have searched for my sins but cannot obtain them.” The Ancestor [Huike] said, “I have finished giving you the rite of repenting sin. You should take refuge in buddha, dharma, and sangha and dwell therein.”

**Pivotal Circumstances **

As for the Master [Sengcan],

what the background of the man was is not known. He first called upon the Second Ancestor [Huike] wearing white robes.

He [Sengcan] was over forty years of age, and he did not say his family or given name. He arrived, paid obeisance, and made a re-

1 As for the Master [Shi wa 師は]. The block of text that follows these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し ) of an identical Chinese passage that appears in the *Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame* under the heading “Thirtieth Ancestor, Great Master Sengcan”:

《景德傳燈錄》不知何許人也。初以白衣謁二祖。（T 2076.51.221c14-15）

2 He was over forty years of age (toshi shijū amari nari 歳四十餘なり). 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 *Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame* under the heading “Twenty-ninth Ancestor, Great Master Huike”:

《景德傳燈錄》年踰四十不言名氏。聿來設禮而問師曰弟子身纏風恙。請和尚懺罪。師曰。將罪來與汝懺。居士良久云。覓罪不可得。師曰。我與汝懺罪竟。宜依佛法僧住。曰今見和尚巳知是僧。未審何名佛法。師曰。是心是佛。是心是法。法佛無二。僧寶亦然。曰今日始知罪性不在內不在外不在中間。如其心然佛法無二也。大師深器之。即為剃髮。云是吾寶也。宜名僧璨。其年三月十八日於光福寺受具。自茲疾漸愈。執侍經二載。大師乃告曰。菩提達磨（舊本云達磨菩提）遠自竺。 （T 2076.51.220c15-25）
quest of the Ancestor [Huike], saying, “Your disciple’s [i.e. my] body is afflicted with a contagious disease” ...and so on, down to...¹ [Huike’s reply] “You should take refuge in buddha, dharma, and sangha and dwell therein.” The Master [Sengcan] said: “Now, having seen you, Reverend, I know that you are the sangha.² I have not yet judged what it is that is called ‘buddha’ or ‘dharma.’” The Ancestor [Huike] said: “mind is buddha, and mind is dharma. Dharma and buddha are not two. That goes for the sangha treasure, too.” The Master [Sengcan] said: “Today I have learned for the first time that the essence of sin does not exist internally, does not exist externally, and does not exist in between. That ‘mind’ is also like this. Buddha and dharma are also not two.” The Ancestor [Huike], with profound conviction, regarded him [Sengcan] as a vessel. He immediately shaved his head and said, “You are my treasure. You shall be named Sengcan [‘Sangha Gemstone’]. On the 18th day of the 3rd month of that year, he had him [Sengcan] receive the full precepts at Guangfu Monastery. Thereafter his [Sengcan’s] disease gradually healed. He [Sengcan] passed two years serving as an acolyte [to Huike]. The Ancestor [Huike] then announced, “Great Master Bodhidharma came from India to this land

衣法共に吾に附す。吾、又汝に附す。又曰く、汝已に得法すと雖も、

and entrusted to me both the robe and dharma. I further entrust them, to you.” He also said, “Although you have already attained the dharma,”³

且らく深山にて行化すべからず。當に國難あるべし。師曰く、師既に預め知れり。願くは示説を垂れたまへ。祖曰く、吾れ知るに

¹ and so on, down to (naisibi 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.

² you are the sangha (kore sō naru 是れ僧なる). In East Asian Buddhism, the glyph 僧 (J. sō) is used to refer both to individual monks and nuns and to the monastic order as a whole. That ambiguity is deliberately invoked here.

³ “Although you have already attained the dharma” (nanji sude ni tokuhō su to iedomo 汝已に得法すと雖も). The block of text that follows 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 “Twenty-ninth Ancestor, Great Master Huike”:

《景德傳燈録》宜處深山。未可行化當有國難。師曰、師既預知。願示説。師曰、非吾知也。斯乃達磨傳般若多羅懸記云。心中雖則外頭出是也。吾校年代正在子跡。當師恩前言勿惟世難。（T 2076.51.221a1-5).
you should enter into the deep mountains for a while and refrain from carrying out conversions. There will be difficulties in the country.” The Master [Sengcan] said, “You already know this in advance. Please tell me about it.” The Ancestor [Huike] said: “It is not my knowledge. Rather, it is what Bodhidharma told me when he conveyed Prajñātāra’s unfulfilled prediction: ‘What is in the mind is auspicious, but what is on the outside is unfortunate.’ By my calculation of the years and generations, it [the prediction] pertains precisely to you. You should carefully consider those earlier words. Do not get caught up in the worldly difficulties.”

1 “What is in the mind is auspicious, but what is on the outside is unfortunate” (shinchū kichi nari to iedomo, gaitō kyō nari 心中吉なりと雖も、外頭凶なり). This refers to Sengcan, whose mind is clear, but who suffers from some kind of skin disease on the “outside” (C. waitou 外頭; J. gaito) of his body. The glyph tou 頭 (J. tō) serves to nominalize the adjective “outside” (C. wai 外; J. gai); it does not mean “head” in this context.

2 Earlier words (C. qianyan 前言; J. zengen). That is, the words of Prajñātāra’s prediction, handed down from him to Bodhidharma and then on to Huike, that there will be worldly difficulties for someone in the future who has a clear mind but an external disease. Huike’s advice to Sengcan is that he try to prevent the prediction from coming true by avoiding worldly affairs.

3 Thereafter (shibashi yori 然しそより). The block of text that follows 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 “Thirtieth Ancestor, Great Master Sengcan”:

《景德傳燈錄》隐于舒州之皖公山。是时周武帝破灭佛法。师往太湖县司空山。居无常处积十馀载。(T 2076.51.221c15-17).
forth to Mount Sikong, having no constant place of residence and changing his appearance, too.

Living in this manner, he took on Śrāmaṇera Daoxin as a disciple. Later, [Sengcan] informed [Daoxin], saying: “My late master,

after passing the transmission to me, went to Yedu, where he spent thirty years. Now that I have found you, why should I be stuck here?” Accordingly, [Sengcan] proceeded to Mount Luofu and later returned to his old haunts. Elites and ordinary people flocked to him and laid out great donations and offerings. The Master [Sengcan] abundantly explained the mind-essence for the fourfold assembly until finally, during a dharma assembly under a large tree, he made a gasshō and met his end.

His sayings, recorded in works such as the Inscription on Faith in Mind, have come to be circulated even to this day. Subsequently, the honorific title of Great Master Jianzhi [“Mirror Wisdom”] was bestowed on him.

INVESTIGATION 【拈提】

1 changing his appearance (katachi mata hennyaku 形また変易). That is, dressing as a layman, because membership in the monastic order was illegal.

2 My late master (senshi 先師). The block of text that follows these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a nearly identical Chinese passage that appears in the Jinde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Thirtieth Ancestor, Great Master Sengcan”:

《景德傳燈錄》師又曰。昔可大師付吾法。後往鄴都行化三十年方終。今吾得汝何滯此乎。即適羅浮山優游二載。却旋舊址逾月。士民奔趨大設檀供。師為四眾廣宣心要訖。於大樹下合掌立終。（T 2076.51.221c26-222a1）

3 bestowed (okuru 贈る). In imperial China, “great master” (C. dashi 大師; J. daishi) titles were generally bestowed posthumously by decree of the emperor.
When Sengcan said “my body is afflicted with a contagious disease” at the time of his first audience [with Huike], he was speaking of leprosy. However, his audience with the ancestral teacher was the cause and condition that instantly eradicated this karmic illness; there were no other circumstances that would account for it. Knowing full well that the essence of sin cannot be grasped, he comprehended the fundamental purity of mind and dharms. Because of this, upon hearing that buddha and dharma are not two, he said that mind and dharms are also like this.

When you really know the original mind, then there is no difference between dying here and being born there. How much less could there be any distinguishing of evil, on the one hand, and good karmic roots on the other? Accordingly, the four primary elements and five aggregates ultimately do not exist, and you have from the start been liberated from skin, flesh, bones, and marrow. Thus the disease of leprosy disappeared, and his original mind appeared before him. Ultimately, he joined the succession as the Thirtieth Ancestor.

[Sengcan] broadly explained the essentials of the dharma, beginning with the words,¹ “The ultimate way is without difficulty; simply avoid picking and choosing,” and [continuing on down to] “The way of speech is cut off; there is no past, future, or present.”

Really, there is no internal or external, and no in between. What is there to choose? What is there to abandon? Getting anything is impossible, and

¹ beginning with the words (to iu yori と謂ふより). The two quotations that follow are the first and last lines, respectively, of the Inscription on Faith in Mind, traditionally attributed to Sengcan:

《信心銘》至道無難，唯嫌揀擇。[T 2010.48.376b20].
《信心銘》言語道斷，非古來今。[T 2010.48.377a10].
abandoning anything is likewise impossible. Already it is clear and obvious, with no hate or love. As for time, there is no deficiency; as for things, there are no excess dharmas. However, although this is how things are, by thoroughly investigating them in detail, we come to grasp that which is ungraspable, and go on to reach the realm of the inconceivable. Do not become the equivalent of annihilated, and do not become the same as wood or stone. Skillfully strike the sky to produce sounds, and tether lightning to make forms. Fix your eyes meticulously on the place where the traces disappear. If there is no further concealing of the body, that is good.

If it is “such,” then although it is said that “it is not a dharma before the eyes, nor is it reached by ears and eyes,”1 you must gain sight of it without a single thread or iota of obstruction, and fully grasp it without a single infinitesimal mote of dust of a deviant path.

Now, with what distinguishing can I attach words to this episode?

**VERSE ON THE OLD CASE  【頌古】**

性空無内外。 罪福不留蹤。 心佛本如是。 法僧自曉聰。

With the emptiness of own-nature, there is neither internal nor external; sins and merits leave no traces.

Mind and buddha are fundamentally like this; dharma and sangha are of themselves clear and bright.

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1 “it is not a dharma before the eyes, nor is it reached by ears and eyes” (ta wa kore mokuzen no hō ni arazu, jimoku no shotō ni arazu). This is a direct quotation, in Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し), of a line that appears in the Case #41 of the Congrong Hermitage Record: 《從容錄》他不是目前法。非耳目之所到。(T 2004.48.254a14-15).

This line is a quotation of Chan Master Jiashan Shanhui 夾山善慧 (J. Kassan Zenne; 805–881), who spoke these words in the context of a well-known kōan. → “not a dharma before the eyes, nor reached by ears and eyes.”