CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT (Dai sanjūhasshō 第三十八章)

ROOT CASE【本則】

The Thirty-eighth Ancestor, Great Master Wuben1 of Mount Dong, sought instruction from Yunyan.

問云、無情説法、什麼人得聞。巖曰、無情説法、無情得聞。師曰、和尚聞否。巖曰、我若得聞、汝卽不得聞吾説法也。師曰、若恁麼、即良价、不聞和尚説法也。巖曰、我説法汝尚不聞、何況無情説法也。師於此大悟。乃述偈呈雲巖曰。也大奇也大奇、無情説法不思議。若將耳聽終難會、眼處聞聲方得知。巖許可。

He [Dongshan] asked a question,2 saying, ‘Insentient things preach the dharma,’ but what person can hear it?” Yunyan said, “When insentient things preach the dharma, insentient things can hear it.” The Master [Dongshan] said, “Reverend, do you hear it or not?” Yunyan said, “If I could hear it, then you would not be able to hear me preach the dharma.” The Master [Dongshan] said, “If that were the case, then I, Liangjie, would not be hearing you preach the dharma, Reverend.”3 Yunyan said, “I am preaching the

1 Great Master Wuben (C. Wuben Dashi 悟本大師; J. Gohon Daishi). This is the posthumous honorary title of Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价 (J. Tōzan Ryōkai; 807–869).
2 asked a question (C. wen yun 問云; J. toite iwaku 問て云く). The block of Chinese text that begins with these words, including the verse at the end, is nearly identical to one that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Chan Master Liangjie of Mount Dong in Yunzhou” (T 2076.51.321c4-11).
3 “If that were the case, then I, Liangjie, would not be hearing you preach the dharma, Reverend” (C. ruo renmo, ji Liangjie, buwen Heshang shuofa ye 若恁麼、即良价、不聞和尚説法也; J. moshi inmo naraba, sunawachi Ryōkai, Oshō no seppō wo kikazaran 若し恁麼ならば、卍ち良価、和尚の説法を聞かさらん). Dongshan’s point here seems to be that he does, in fact, hear Yunyan’s preaching; therefore, Yunyan’s preceding “if/then” statement must be wrong, because if it were correct it would mean that Yunyan himself could not hear the preaching of insentient things. However, it is also possible to translate Dongshan’s response to Yunyan’s “if/then” statement as: “If that is the case, then I, Liangjie, do not hear you preaching. Reverend.” Other translators take it that way (Cook, p. 193; Cleary, p. 145). Both translations are grammatically correct, but the one given here makes more sense in the context of the exchange as a whole.
dharma, but you are *not* hearing it,¹ much less ‘insentient things preaching the dharma!’” With this, the Master [Dongshan] greatly awakened. He then composed a verse and presented it to Yunyan. It said:

How uncanny! How uncanny!
“Insentient things preach the dharma” is inconceivable.
If you use your ears to listen, after all, it is hard to understand;
only when the sense field of vision hears voices will you come to know it.

Yunyan approved.

**Pivotal Circumstances  【機縁】**

The Master’s [Dongshan’s] personal name was Liangjie.

He was a man of Guiji,² and his family was the Yu Clan. While young, he followed his master in reciting the *Heart Sūtra*. Upon reaching the place in the text that reads “There are no eyes, ears,

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¹ “I am preaching the dharma, but you are not hearing it” (C. *wo shuofa ru shang bu-wen* 我説法汝尚不聞; J. *waga seppō sura nanji nao kikazu* 我が説法すら汝尚聞かず). This rejoinder refutes Dongshan’s assumption that he is, in fact, hearing Yunyan’s preaching. The implication is that Dongshan hears the words but entirely misses the point.

² He was a man of Guiji (Kaikei no hito nari 会稽の人なり). 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 “Chan Master Liangjie of Mount Dong in Yunzhou”:

《景德傳燈録》会稽人也。姓兪氏。幼歳從師因念般若心經。以無根塵義問其師。其師駭然、之異而問。吾非汝師。即指往五洩山禮默禪師披剃。年二十一、嵩山に詣して具戒す。

(ת 2076.51.321b20-23).

This passage (including the preceding words, “The Master’s personal name was Liangjie”) also appears in the *Discourse Record of Chan Master Liangjie of Mount Dong in Ruizhou* (ת 1986B.47.519b18-22).
nose, tongue, body, or mind,” he immediately felt his face with his hands and asked his master: “I have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and so on. Why does the sūtra say, ‘There are no’?” His master, surprised, thought he was extraordinary and said, “I am not your master.”1 Thereupon, he directed [Dongshan] to go to Chan Master Limo2 of Mount Wuxie, to don monkish robes and be tonsured. In his twenty-first year, he [Dongshan] went to Mount Song and received the full precepts.

母の為に愛子として、兄亡じ弟貧し、父亦先だちて亡じき。一度空門を慕て永く老母を辭し、誓て曰く、我れ道を得ずんば、再び古郷に還らじ、又親を拜せじと。是の如く誓ひて郷里を辭す。卒に參學事了て後に洞山に住す。

1 “I am not your master” (C. wo fei ru shi 吾非汝師; J. ware nanji ga shi ni arazu 吾れ汝が師に非ず). According to the biography of Dongshan that appears in the Outline of the Linked Flames of Our Lineage, he went forth from household life at age seven under an unnamed Vinaya master who gave him the Heart Sūtra. After hearing Dongshan’s question about that text, the Vinaya master told him “I am not your master” and sent him to study the “Mahāyāna dharma” at Mount Wuxie, where he (again?) went forth from household life (CBETA, X79, no. 1557, p. 176, b7-12 // Z 2B:9, p. 382, d3-8 // R136, p. 764, b3-8).

2 Chan Master Limo (C. Limo Chanshi 礼默禪師; J. Reimoku Zenji). The name given this Chan master is an error that occurred in the process of transcribing the Chinese original into Japanese: the correct name is Chan Master Lingmo (C. Lingmo Chanshi 靈默禪師; J. Reimoku Zenji). The Chinese of the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame reads:

He directed [Dongshan] to go to Mount Wuxie, pay obeisance to Chan Master Mo, and don monkish robes and be tonsured.

《景德傳燈錄》指往五洩山禮默禪師剃。 (T 2076.51.321b22-23).

The “Chan Master Mo” mentioned in the text is Wuxie Lingmo 五洩靈默 (J. Gosetsu Reimoku 五洩禮默), a disciple of Shitou Xiqian: see, for example, Song Biographies of Eminent Monks (T 2061.50.768c). The Japanese transcription found in the Shūmuchō edition of the Denkōroku, however, mistakenly takes the verb to “pay obeisance” (C. li 礼; J. rei) as the first glyph of Chan Master Mo’s name, erroneously rendering him as “Chan Master Limo.” This mistake is not found in the Kenkon’in manuscript, which gives: “He directed [Dongshan] to go to the place of Chan Master Lingmo on Mount Wuxie” (sashite Gosetsuzan no Reimoku Zenji no tokoro ni yukite 指五洩山禮默禪師ノ 處ニ行). The mistake seems to have occurred when manuscript versions of the Denkōroku were edited for publication in 1857, at which time either the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame or the Collated Essentials of the Five Flame Records (both of which contain exactly the same Chinese original) was used as the basis for Japanese transcription.
He [Dongshan] was his mother’s beloved son, his elder brother having died, his younger brother being deficient, and his father having died even earlier. But once he became attached to the gate of emptiness, he separated forever from his aged mother, vowing, “As long as I have not gained the way, I will never again return to my hometown or make prostrations to my parents.”\(^1\) Having vowed in this manner, he left his hometown. Eventually, after completing the matter of his studies, he served as abbot of Mount Dong.

[Dongshan’s] mother, separated from her one son,\(^2\) seems to have had no other source of protection and nourishment. Day after day, she searched for him, eventually taking up with beggars and making rounds with them, to and fro. Learning that “my son is serving as abbot of Mount Dong,” she went there longing to see him, but Dongshan firmly refused her, locking his room in the abbot’s quarters and not letting her enter. That was because he did not allow a face-to-face encounter. As a result, his mother was resentful and, in the end, died in anguish outside his room. After she died, Dongshan himself went and found three cups of rice kernels that she had obtained by begging. He took it and added it to the morning gruel in the administrative wing, having it offered to the entire assembly in support of funerary prayers for her rebirth beyond the clouds. Not long after, his mother appeared to Dongshan in a dream, saying, “Because you firmly maintained your resolve and did not see me, I destroyed the basis of my deluded feelings of attachment and, on the strength of those good karmic roots, I have been born in the Heaven of the Thirty-three.”

\(^1\) will never... make prostrations to my parents (oya wo hai seji 親を拜せじ). The Novice Ordination Liturgy found in the Rules of Purity for Chan Monasteries contains the admonition: “After leaving home... do not make prostrations to your father or mother.” Thus, Dongshan’s vow was more the norm than the exception. → repay blessings.

\(^2\) one son (issbi 一子). Usually, this term means “only son” or “only child.” However, in the present context, it must mean “only competent son,” since Dongshan is said to have had a younger brother who was “deficient” (mazushi 貧し).
Investigation 【拈提】

While there is no superior or inferior with regard to the virtue of any ancestral masters, Dongshan, as the ancestor of old of this gate, made our lineage style flourish in an exceptional way, for, as described above, his was the strength to profoundly maintain his resolve to leave his parents. When, as a student trainee, he first sought instruction in Nanquan’s assembly, it happened to coincide with Mazu’s memorial service.1 When

1 it happened to coincide with Mazu’s memorial service (Baso no kishin ni au 馬祖の 諡辰に値ふ). The block of text that begins with these words and runs all the way down to the statement that, "At this, the Master [Dongshan] had an insight," including the quotation of the dialogue involving National Teacher Huizhong, is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of an identical Chinese passage that appears in the Discourse Record of Chan Master Liangjie of Mount Dong in Ruizhou: 

《瑞州洞山良价禅師語錄》 值馬祖諡辰修齋。南泉問衆云。來日設馬祖齋。未審。馬祖還來否。衆皆無對。師出對云。待有伴即來。南泉云。此子後生。甚堪雕琢。師云。和尚莫壓良為賤。次參潙山。問云。頃聞南陽忠國師有無情說話。某甲未究其微。潙山云。闍黎記得哉。師云。記得。潙山云。汝試舉一覧看。師遂舉。僧問。如何是古佛心。國師云。牆壁瓦礫是。僧云。牆壁瓦礫。豈不是無情。國師云。是。僧云。還解說法否。國師云。常説熾然説無間歇。僧云。某甲為甚麼不聞。國師云。汝自不聞。不可妨他聞者也。僧云。未審甚麼人得聞。國師云。諸聖得聞。僧云。和尚聞否。國師云。我不聞。僧云。和尚既不聞。爭知無情解說。國師云。倚不聞。我若聞。即齊於諸聖。汝若不聞我說法也。僧云。恁麼則衆生無分去也。國師云。我為衆生説。不為諸聖説。僧云。眾生聞後如何。國師云。即非衆生。僧云。無情說法。據何典教。國師云。灼然言不該典。非君于之所談。汝豈不見。華嚴經云。刹説衆生説三世一切說。師舉了。潙山云。我這裏亦有。祇是罕遇其人。師云。某甲未明。乞師指示。潙山起拂子云。會麼。師云。不會。請和尚説。潙山云。父母所生口。終不為子説。師云。還有與師同時慕道者否。潙山云。此去澧陵攸縣。石室相连。有雲巖道人。若能撥草贍風。必為子之所重。師云。未審此人如何。潙山云他會問老僧。學人欲奉師去時如何。老僧對他道直須絶滲漏始得。他道。
they were preparing the maigre feast, Nanquan asked the congregation, “Tomorrow we will hold the maigre feast for Mazu, but I wonder, will Mazu come back for it or not?” No response was forthcoming from anyone in the congregation. The Master [Dongshan] came forward and responded, saying, “He will wait for there to be a companion, and then he will come.” Nanquan said, “Although you belong to the young generation, you are a jewel eminently worthy of cutting and polishing.” The Master [Dongshan] said, “Reverend, do not smash the good and make it worthless.”

Next, he [Dongshan] sought instruction from Weishan. He [Dongshan] asked, “Recently I heard that National Teacher Huizhong of Nanyang had a talk on ‘insentient things preach the dharma,’ but I have not yet mastered its secret.” Weishan said, “Ācārya, do you remember it or not?” The Master [Dongshan] said, “I remember it.” Weishan said, “Try to see if you can raise it once.” The Master [Dongshan] then raised it:

僧問ふ。如何が是れ古佛心。國師曰く。塀壁瓦礫是。僧曰く。塀壁瓦礫。豈是無情ざるや。國師曰く。是。僧曰く。還て説法を解すや否や。國師曰く。常説熾然。説無間歇。僧曰く。某甲甚徻してか聞かざる。國師曰く。汝自ら聞かず。他の聞者を妨げべからず。僧曰く。未審。甚人か聞くを得ん。國師曰く。諸聖聞くを得ん。僧曰く。和尚既に聞かずまば。爭てか無情の説法を解するを知らん。國師曰く。願に我れ聞かず。我若し聞かば即ち諸聖に齊し。汝若ち我が説法を聞かざらん。國師曰く。我若し聞かず。汝即ち吾説法を聞かざる。國師曰く。我若し聞かさざらん。僧曰く。甚徻ならば則ち衆生無分にし去るや。國師曰く。我れ衆生の為に説く。諸聖の為に説かず。僧曰く。衆生聞て後如何。國師曰く。即ち衆生に非ず。僧曰く。無情の説法何の典教にか据る。國師曰く。灼然。言の典を該ねざるは君子の所談に非ず。汝豈見ずや。華嚴經に云く。刹説衆生説。三世一切説と。

還得不違師旨也無。老僧道。第一不得道老僧在這裏。師遂辭潙山。徑造雲巖。舉前因緣了。便問。無情説法。甚徻人得聞。雲巖云。無情得聞。師云。和尚聞否。雲巖云。我若聞。汝即不聞吾説法也。師云。某甲為甚徻不聞。雲巖焚起拂子云。還聞喲。師云不聞。雲巖云。我説法。汝尚不聞。豈況無情説法乎。師云。無情説法。説何典教。雲巖云。豈不見。彌陀經に云く。水鳥樹林悉皆念佛念法。師於此有省。[T 1986B.47.519b23-520a1].

1 smash the good and make it worthless (ryō wo asshite sen to nasu 良を壓して賤と为す). In cutting a rough jewel (or piece of jade) to improve it, there is always the danger of breaking and ruining it.
A monk asked, “How about the ‘old buddha mind’?” The National Teacher said, “It is ‘fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles’.” The monk said, “‘Fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles’ — aren’t these insentient things?” The National Teacher said, “Yes.” The monk said, “Are they, too, explaining the dharma preaching, or not?” The National Teacher said, “They are blazig with constant preaching, and that preaching has no interruption or end.” The monk said, “How come I do not hear it?” The National Teacher said, “You yourself do not hear it, but that does not interfere with the hearing of others.” The monk said, “I wonder, what people are able to hear it?” The National Teacher said, “Sages are able to hear it.” The monk said, “Reverend, do you also hear it, or not?” The National Teacher said, “I do not hear it.” The monk said, “Reverend, if you have not already heard it, then how can you know the explaining of the dharma preaching of insentient things?” The National Teacher said, “Fortunately, I do not hear it. If I heard it, then I would be equal to the sages, and you would not be able to hear my preaching of the dharma.” The monk said, “If so, then it goes beyond the capacity of living beings.” The National Teacher said, “I preach for living beings; I do not preach for sages.” The monk said, “After living beings hear it, then what?” The National Teacher said, “Then they are not living beings.”

1 “Are they, too, explaining the preaching of dharma, or not?” (kaette seppō wo ge su ya ina ya 還て説法を解すや否や). This odd locution (“explaining the preaching”) is the result of a mistake in the Japanese transcription of the Chinese original, which erroneously breaks the binomial verb to “explain” (C. jieshuo 解説; J. kaisetsu) into two separate verbs: to “explain” (C. jie 解; J. kai) and to “preach” (C. shuo 説; J. setsu). The Chinese original says: “Are they, too, explaining the dharma, or not?” (C. hai jieshuo fa fou 釋經解說否). If transcribed correctly, the Japanese would be: kaette hō wo kaisetsu su ya ina ya 還て法を解説すや否や.

2 “How can you know the explaining of the dharma preaching of insentient things?” (ikade ka mujō no seppō wo ge suru wo shiran 爭でか無情の説法を解するを知らん). Again (see previous note), the awkwardness of this sentence is due to a mistake in the Japanese transcription of the Chinese original, which erroneously breaks the binomial verb to “explain” (C. jieshuo 解説; J. kaisetsu) into two separate verbs: “explain” (C. jie 解; J. kai) and “preach” (C. shuo 説; J. setsu). The Chinese original says: “How can you know that insentient things explain the dharma?” (C. zheng shi wuqing jieshuo fa 知知無情解説). If transcribed correctly, the Japanese would be: ikade ka mujō no hō wo kaisetsu suru wo shiran 爭でか無情の法を解説するを知らん.
things preach the dharma’ attested?” The National Teacher said, “Obviously, words that are not found in scripture are not what should be embraced by the superior man. Have you not seen the [verse in the] Flower Garland Sūtra that says:¹ ‘Lands preach, living beings preach; in the three times, everything preaches?’”

When the Master [Dongshan] had finished raising [the preceding case], Weishan said, “I, here as well, also have it.² Only, it is very rare to encounter that person.”³ The Master [Dongshan] said, “I have not yet clarified it. I beg you, Master, please instruct me.”

¹ Flower Garland Sūtra that says: (Kegonkyō ni iwaku 华嚴經に云く). There is, in fact, a long verse in the Flower Garland Sūtra that contains the lines:

Buddhas preach, bodhisattvas preach; lands preach, living beings preach; in the three times, everything preaches.

² “I, here as well, also have it” (waga shari ni mo mata ari 我這裏にも亦た有り). This statement is unclear as to what it is that Weishan “also has.” The antecedent could be “a talk on ‘insentient things preach the dharma,’” which Dongshan says that National Teacher Huizhong “had” (ari 有り). In other words, Weishan could be saying, “I have a talk on that subject, too.”

³ that person (sono hito 其人). Perhaps this means, “a person who can understand the talk on ‘insentient things preach the dharma.’”
Weishan held up his whisk and said, “Do you understand?” The Master [Dongshan] said, “I do not understand. Please, Reverend, explain.” Weishan said, “A mouth born of a father and mother, after all, cannot explain it to you.” The Master [Dongshan] said, “Is there, or is there not, anyone else who searched for the way at the same time as you, Master?” Weishan said: “If you go from here to the You District in Liling, in the linked stone grottos, there is a person of the way named Yunyan. If you are able to ‘ignore the grass and look up to the wind,’ then you will certainly be valued by him.” The Master [Dongshan] said, “I wonder, what sort of person is he?” Weishan said: “He once asked this old monk [me, Weishan], ‘When a student trainee wishes to serve his master, what then?’ This old monk [I, Weishan] responded to him, saying, ‘Straight away, you must cut off defilements, then for the first time you will get it.’ He [Yunyan] said, ‘then will I be able to avoid disregarding your instructions, Master, or not?’ This old monk [I, Weishan] said, ‘In the first place, you must not say that this old monk is here.’”

The Master [Dongshan] thereupon took his leave of Weishan and went directly to Yunyan. After raising the aforementioned episode, he asked, “‘Insentient things preach the dharma,’ but what person can hear it?” Yunyan said, “Insentient things can hear it.” The Master [Dongshan] said, “Reverend, do you hear it or not?” Yunyan said, “If I could hear it, then you would not be able to hear me preach the dharma.” The Master [Dongshan] said, “Why can’t I hear it?” Yunyan held up his whisk and said, “Do you hear this?” The Master [Dongshan] said, “I do not hear it.” Yunyan said, “If you cannot even hear my preaching of the dharma, how much less so the dharma preaching of insentient things?” The Master [Dongshan] asked, “In what authoritative scripture is ‘insentient things preach the dharma’ found?” Yunyan said, “Have you not seen the [passage in the] *Amitābha Sūtra* that says: ‘Water fowl and groves of trees, all of them, recollect buddhas and recollect dharma’?” At this, the Master [Dongshan] had an insight.

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1 “Water fowl and groves of trees, all of them, recollect buddhas and recollect dharma” (C. *shuiniao shulin, xijie nianfo nianfa* 水鳥樹林、悉皆念佛念法; J. *suichō jurin, shikkai nenbutsu nenpō*). This exact phrase is not found in any extant recensions of the *Amitābha Sūtra*. However, the idea that “water fowl and groves of trees constantly preach the dharma” (C. *shuiniao shulin chang shuafa* 水鳥樹林常說法; J. *suichō jurin jō seppō*) is found in a number of commentaries on that sūtra.
This episode began in the assembly of the National Teacher and finally reached its conclusion at Yunyan's place.

Thereupon, he [Dongshan] composed a verse,1 saying:

How uncanny! How uncanny!... and so on, down to...2 only when the sense field of vision hears voices will you come to know it.

The Master [Dongshan] asked Yunyan, "Do I still have residual afflictions that have not been exhausted?" Yunyan said, "What have you done up to now?"3 The Master [Dongshan] said, "I have yet to practice even the noble truths." Yunyan said, "Still, are you joyful or not?" The Master said, "It is not that I am not joyful, but it is as if I have plucked a single bright jewel from a heap of filth."

The Master [Dongshan] asked Yunyan, "What about when I wish

1 Thereupon, he composed a verse (sunawachi ge wo nobete 乃ち偈を述て). The block of text that begins with these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of an identical Chinese passage that appears in the Discourse Record of Chan Master Liangjie of Mount Dong in Ruizhou:《瑞州洞山良价禅師語錄》乃述偈云。也大奇也大奇。無情説法不思議。若將耳聽終難曾。眼處聞聲方得知。師問雲巖。某甲有餘習未盡。雲巖云。汝曾作甚麼來。師云。聖諦亦不爲。雲巖云。還歡喜也未。師云。歡喜則不無。如糞掃堆頭。拾得一顆明珠。師問雲巖擬欲相見時如何。雲巖云。問取通事舍人。師云。見問次。雲巖云。向汝道甚麼。（T 1986B.47.520a1-8）

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

3 “What have you done up to now?” (nanji katsute nani wo ka nashi kitaru 汝曾て甚麼をか作し来る). Exactly this question, and the identical response — “I have yet to practice even the noble truths” (shōtai mo mata nasazu 聖諦も亦た爲さず) — are attributed to the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng, and his disciple Qingyuan in the Root Case of Chapter 34 of the Denkōroku.
to have a face-to-face encounter?" [Yunyan] said, "Ask the secretarial receptionist." The Master [Dongshan] said, "I am asking right now." [Yunyan] said, "What is he saying to you?"

When the Master [Dongshan] was about to take leave of Yunyan, he questioned him, saying,

“A hundred years from now, if there is suddenly a person who asks whether or not I would portray your likeness, Master, how should I reply?” Yunyan, after a long pause, said, “It is just this.”

1 “What about when I wish to have a face-to-face encounter?” (shōken sento giyoku suru toki ikan 擬欲相見時如何). The original Chinese here reads: niyu xiangjian shi ru be 擬欲相見時如何. It is not clear in either the Chinese or Japanese transcription exactly who Dongshan might want to have a face-to-face encounter with, since he is in the midst of such an encounter with Yunyan when he speaks those words. Perhaps he means, “What should I do if I want to meet with you [Yunyan] again later?”

2 secretarial receptionist (C. tongshi sheren 通事舎人; J. tsūji shajin). In Tang and Song dynasty China, this was the formal title of officials in the imperial court who handled incoming memorials (written petitions and advice) to the throne and were responsible for vetting and introducing people who came for audiences with the emperor. In the present context, the usage is obviously metaphorical, but it is not clear who or what holds the position of “emperor” in this trope. Perhaps it is Yunyan himself, or perhaps it is the innate buddha-mind.

3 he questioned him, saying (toite iwaku 問て曰く). 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 Discourse Record of Chan Master Liangjie of Mount Dong in Ruizhou: 《瑞州洞山良价禪師語録》百年前。忽有人問還邈得師眞否。如何祇對。雲巖良久云。祇這是。師沈吟。雲巖云。付閑筆。大須審細。師猶涉疑。後因過水睹影。大悟前旨。有偈云。切忌從他覓。迢迢與我疎。我今獨自往、處處得逢渠、渠今正是我、我今不是渠。應須恁麼會、方得契如如。

4 “It is just this” (C. zhí zhe shì 只這事; J. tada kore kore 只だこれ事). This appears to be an abbreviation of the reply that Yunyan gives to Dongshan in the Ancestors Hall Collection (the locus classicus of this dialogue), which is: “It is just this fellow” (C. zhí zhege ban shì 只這裡漢是). William F. Powell writes: “According to medieval Chinese
The Master [Dongshan] hesitated. Yunyan said, “Ācārya Liangjie, the acceding to this matter is something that you must do with the utmost care.” The Master [Dongshan] still harbored doubts. Later, when he went across some water and saw his own reflection, he greatly awakened to the gist of that earlier instruction. In a verse, he said:

Do not seek by following others,
lest you become far, far alienated from your self.
I now proceed all alone,
yet in place after place I am able to meet him.¹
He, now, is truly me,
but I, now, am not him.
There must be such an understanding:
only then will you be able to tally with thusness.

Dongshan concluded the matter of his whole life's study and immediately eliminated his obstructing doubts. The episode, truly, is about this.

Now, with regard to this episode of “insentient things preach the dharma,”

there was a person named Postulant Zhangfen of Nanyang.² He

¹ him (C. gu 果; J. kyo, kare). This pronoun can also mean “leader” or “boss.” In this context, the word is highly ambiguous. It clearly refers to Dongshan's own reflection, which he saw in the water, but because that moment of seeing occasioned his awakening, it can also refer to his innate buddha-mind or buddha-nature.

² there was a person named Postulant Zhangfen of Nanyang (Nan'yō no Chōfun Anja to iu ari 南陽の張濆行者と云あり). The block of text that begins with these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a nearly identical Chinese passage.
inquired of the National Teacher [Huizhong], saying, “I humbly confess that although you, Reverend, speak of ‘insentient things preaching the dharma,’ I have yet to experience that matter. I beg you, Reverend, please instruct me.” The Master [Huizhong] said, “If you ask about ‘insentient things preaching the dharma,’ only when you understand the insentience of others will you be able to hear my preaching of the dharma. You should just go listen to the dharma preaching of insentient things.” Zhangfen said, “If we can just limit the discussion to what falls within skillful means for present-day sentient beings, what is the point of the episode concerning insentient things?” The Master [Huizhong] said: “Within all moving and functioning in this present moment, which is just the two mental streams of ordinary and sagely, the entirety has not the slightest arising or ceasing. That is to say, it is the hidden consciousness that is not subsumed under the categories of either existence or non-existence. Blazing, it sees and perceives. It just listens to the fact that it has no deluded consciousness or binding attachment. That is why the Sixth Ancestor said, “The discrimination that occurs when the six sense faculties confront sense objects is not consciousness.”

that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading of “National Teacher Huizhong of Guangzhai Monastery in Xijing”:

《景德傳燈錄》南陽張濆行者問，伏承和尚説無情說法，某甲未體其事。乞和尚垂示。師曰。汝若問無情說法，解他無情方得聞我説法。汝但聞取無情説法去。濆曰。只約如今有情方便之中。如何是無情因緣。師曰。如今一切動用之中。但凡聖兩流都無少分起滅。便是出識不屬有無。熾然見覺。只聞無其情識繫執。所以六祖云。六根對境分別非識。(T 2076.51.244b26-c4).

1 The entirety has not the slightest arising or ceasing (subete shōbun no kimetsu nashi 都て少分の起滅なし). The English translation here follows the Japanese transcription, which is misleading. The Chinese original says: “the chief [or, ‘the seat of government’] has not the slightest arising or ceasing” (du wu shaofen qimie 都無少分起滅). The Japanese transcription glosses the glyph du 都 as “everything” (subete 都て), but it should probably be read as “capital” (miyako 都), because the remainder of the passage makes it clear that it is a metaphor for the storehouse-consciousness.

2 It just listens to the fact that it has no deluded consciousness or binding attachment (tada sono jōshiki to keishū to naki koto wo kiku 只其情識繫執と無きことを聞く). The translation here makes little sense because it follows the Japanese transcription, which is in error. The Chinese original, which does make sense, says: “It just listens, without any deluded consciousness or binding attachments” (shi wen wu qi qingshi jizhi 只聞無其情識繫執).

3 “The discrimination that occurs when the six sense faculties confront sense objects is not consciousness” (C. liugen dui jing fenbie fei shi 六根對境分別非識; J. rokkon
This is the manner in which Nanyang [Huizhong] discussed “insentient things preach the dharma.” In short, he [Nanyang] said:1 “Within all moving and functioning in this present moment, which is just the two mental streams of ordinary and sagely, the entirety has not the slightest arising or ceasing. That is to say, it is the hidden consciousness that is not subsumed under the categories of either existence or non-existence. Blazing, it sees and perceives.” However, people ordinarily think that when someone says “insentient,” the reference is to “fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles,” or “offering lamps and bare pillars.” That is not the case with the saying of the National Teacher that we are presently considering. [What he means by “insentient” is a state in which] the views held by ordinary people and sages are not yet distinguished, and the feeling of attachment to the ideas of delusion and awakening has not yet arisen. Needless to say, it is not a matter of calculation based on sentiment and discriminating thought. It is not to be found in the signs of movement of going and coming in birth and death. There is [what the National Teacher called] a “hidden consciousness.” Truly, this hidden consciousness is “blazing as it sees and perceives.” It is not the “binding attachment” of “deluded consciousness.”

1 In short, he said (sunawachi iwaku 即ち曰く). The quotation that follows this lead-in is a verbatim repetition of part of the longer quotation that appears above.
Thus, Dongshan, too, said: “There must be such an understanding; only then will you be able to tally with thusness.”¹ If you know that to get anywhere, you go alone and by your own volition, then there will never be a time when you do not tally with thusness. Thus, the ancients said, “Formerly it was a wisdom, apart from thusness, that was verified by thusness; nor is there any thusness, apart from wisdom, that is cultivated by wisdom.”²

Seeing that “thusness is unmoving,” this is “perfectly complete constant knowing.”³ Thus the saying: “Fully clear complete knowing does not rely

¹ “There must be such an understanding; only then will you be able to tally with thusness” (masa ni subekaraku inmo ni e shite masa ni nyonyo ni kanau kotō wo en 应に須らく恁麼に会して方に如如に契ふことを得ん). This is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of the last two lines of Dongshan’s verse, which is given in Chinese above: 懇応須要会、方得契如如.

² “Formerly it was a wisdom, apart from thusness, that was verified by thusness; nor is there any thusness, apart from wisdom, that is cultivated by wisdom” (katsute nyo no hoka no chi no nyo no tame ni shō seraruru nari, chi no hoka no nyo no tame ni shū seraruru nashī 曾て知の外の智の如の為に證せらるるなり、智の外の如の智の為に修せらるるなし). The English translation of these two clauses makes little sense, but it accurately renders the Japanese of the Shūmuchō edition of the Denkōroku, which faithfully follows the 1885 edition by Ōuchi Seiran (大内青巒 1845–1918). Ōuchi’s edition has the word nari なり (“is”), which is translated here as “was” because it follows the word katsute 曾て (“formerly”). However, all other manuscripts and printed editions of the Denkōroku have the word naku なく (“there is none”), which when modified by katsute 曾て is best translated as “there has never been.” Thus, all other editions read: “There has never been any wisdom, apart from thusness, that can be verified by thusness; nor is there any suchness, apart from wisdom, that is verified by thusness” (katsute nyo no hoka no chi no nyo no tame ni shō seraruru naku, chi no hoka no nyo no tame ni shū seraruru nashī 曾て知の外の知の如の為に證せらるるなく、知の外の知の智の為に修せらるるなし). The latter phrasing makes good sense in Japanese and in English translation, and it accurately renders the original Chinese on which the Japanese is based: ceng wu ru wai zhi neng zheng yu ru 曾無如不動智能證於如. That saying is found in the Extensive Record of Chan Master Hongzhi and other, earlier Chinese Buddhist texts. → “There has never been any wisdom, apart from thusness, that can be verified by thusness; nor is there any suchness, apart from wisdom, that is verified by thusness.”

³ Seeing that “thusness is unmoving,” this is “perfectly complete constant knowing” (nyonyo fudō ni shite ryōryō jōbi nari 如知不動にして了常知なり). The two quotations given here are frequently found, independently of one another, in a wide range of Chinese Buddhist texts. → “perfectly complete constant knowing.” → “thusness is unmoving.” However, the two expressions are also used together in the Discourse Record
on thought.” Blazing with seeing and perceiving, it is without binding attach-
ments. Weishan said,1 “A mouth born of a father and mother, after all, cannot explain it to you.” It was also said,2 “If living beings are able to hear, then they are not living beings.” Because he [Dongshan] received instruc-
tions in this way from various masters and understood true insentience,3 he
greatly propagated our lineage style as the ancestor of old of our one gate.

 Accordingly, gentlemen, by intently contemplating this in detail, you will
come to see and perceive the blazing of this hidden consciousness. It is
called the insentient. Because it does not chase after sound and form and is
not bound by deluded consciousness, it is called the insentient. Truly, that
principle must be expounded meticulously.

The expression “eye on the forehead” (C. dingmen yan 頂門眼; J. chōmon gen) refers to
the “third eye” or “wisdom eye” that is depicted on Maheśvara’s forehead. The expres-
sion “look beneath your feet” (C. kan jiaoxia 看脚下; J. kan kyakka) is commonly used
in Chan/Zen texts to mean “examine your own standpoint” — i.e. your own mind.
Yuanwu plays with these ideas by coining the phrase “eyes of your feet” (C. jiaoyan 脚
眼; J. kyakugen).

1 Weishan said (Isan iwaku 潙山曰く). The quotation that follows also appears, ver-
bation in the dialogue between Dongshan and Weishan that is quoted earlier in this
chapter.

2 It was also said (mata iwaku 又曰く). The quote that follows is a paraphrase of the
exchange between an unnamed monk and National Teacher Huizhong that is quoted
earlier in this chapter: “The monk said, ‘After living beings hear it, then what?’ The
National Teacher said, ‘Then they are not living beings.’”

3 true insentience (shinko no mujō 眞箇の無情). According to the argument developed
in this chapter, “true insentience” is not the insentience of “fences, walls, tiles, and peb-
bles,” but rather the insentience of the “hidden consciousness.” The latter seems to be
something like the storehouse-consciousness, or perhaps the buddha-mind. → hidden
consciousness.
Thus, when you hear an explanation of “insentient things,” do not mistakenly interpret it as “fences and walls.” It is just that, when you have no deluded attachment to sentiments and do not mistakenly spread yourself out in seeing and hearing, that hidden consciousness is perfectly clear, not obscure; it is perfectly complete and clear. Although you may try to grasp this place, there is no getting it. Because it does not involve any sign of form, it is not an existing thing. Although you may try to discard it, there is no separating from it. Because it has been your companion from long kalpas past, it is not non-existent. Nor is it the faculty of conscious knowing or calculation. How then could it possibly involve the four primary elements or five aggregates?

Thus, Hongzhi said:1 “There is a wisdom that exists apart from sentiment and discriminating thought; there is a body that is not the four primary elements or the five aggregates.” That is precisely this kind of hidden consciousness.

1 Hongzhi said ( Wanshi iwaku 宏智曰く). The quotation that follows is not a direct Japanese transcription ( yomikudashi 読み下し) of any extant Chinese original, although it presents itself as such. It could be a loose paraphrase, perhaps from memory, of the end of the following passage that appears in the Extensive Record of Chan Master Keizan:

Birth after birth, death after death: the traces of revolving in rebirth are never exhausted. Serene and perfectly alert, the functioning of illumination is not obscured. Clouds rest on the mountains, yet are your father; here, meritorious deeds result in meritorious deeds. The moon resides in the water, yet is your home; right here, dwell where there is no dwelling. Apart from seeing, hearing, perceiving, and knowing, there exists a wisdom that is not the discriminating mind. Apart from earth, water, fire, and wind, there exists a body that does not have the mark of being compounded.

《宏智禪師廣錄》生生死死。輪迴之跡無窮。寂寂惺惺。眞照之機不昧。雲倚山而為父。箇中功就於功。月在水而為家。直下住無所住。離見聞覺知有智。非分別心。離地火風有身。非和合相。（T 2001.48.9b25-c1).
sciousness. As for the [National Teacher’s] saying “they are blazing with constant preaching,” it means that there is never a time when it does not appear, and that it is called “preaching.” It causes one to “raise the eyebrows and blink the eyes”; it causes one to walk, stand, sit, or recline. “In emergencies and when falling down”; “dying here, being born there”; “when you get hungry, eat, and when you get tired, sleep” — all this is entirely “preaching.” Speech and action, behavior and deportment, to repeat, are “preaching.” It is not simply a matter of preaching that has words or has no words, but rather that everything stands out magnificently, clear and obvious, with nothing concealed. From the “croaking of frogs” to the “cries of earthworms,” everything is revealed. That is why it is [as the National Teacher said] “blazing with constant preaching, and that preaching has no interruption or end.” If you are able to see this in detail, then at the end of the day you certainly will be able to serve as a model for others, just like our Eminent Ancestor Dongshan.

Now, how can I expound on this principle?

1 it is called “preaching” (kore wo setsu to iu之を説と謂ふ). That is to say, hidden consciousness is always present, and its presence is referred to metaphorically as “preaching.”

2 From the “croaking of frogs” to the “cries of earthworms” (gama naki kyūin naku ni itaru made蝦蟆鳴き蚯蚓鳴くに到るまで). This phrase alludes to a saying found in the Discourse Record of Reverend Rujing:

[Rujing], at a convocation in the dharma hall, said: “After many days of heavy rain, the sky is clear and the weather is fine. Frogs croak and earthworms cry. The old buddha has never been in the past: he is displaying his vajra eyeballs. Bah! Tangled vines! Tangled vines!”

《如淨和尚語錄》上堂。霖霪大雨。豁遠大晴。蝦蟆鳴蚯蚓鳴。古佛不曾過去。發揮金剛眼睛。咄。葛藤葛藤。（T 1997.47.787b3-5）

It is not clear what Rujing meant by the “crying” (C. ming %; J. naku) of “earthworms” (C. qiuyin 蚯蚓; J. kyūin). That verb stands for any sounds emitted by animals (in the case of frogs, “croaking”), but earthworms have no mouths and make no sounds that humans can hear. Earthworms do come to the surface when the ground is saturated after heavy rains, becoming visible in contrast to their usual hiddenness, but their “cries” must be metaphorical or imaginary, much like the “preaching with no words” (mugen no setsu無言の説) that is mentioned in the previous sentence of the Denkōroku. However, the crying of earthworms is a trope in Chinese poetry that serves as a “season word” (C. jiuyu 季語; J. kigo) that indicates autumn, so it seems that people in East Asia must have believed some sound they heard from the ground at that time of year was made by earthworms.
VERSE ON THE OLD CASE 【頌古】

The ever-so-subtle hidden consciousness has no feeling of attachment; every day, it makes that preaching blaze.

微微幽識非情執。平日令伊說熾然。
The ever-so-subtle hidden consciousness has no feeling of attachment; every day, it makes that preaching blaze.