CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

【本則】

The Thirty-second Ancestor, Chan Master Daman, encountered the Thirty-first Ancestor [Daoxin] on the road to Huangmei.

The Ancestor [Daoxin] asked, “What is your family name?”

1 Chan Master Daman (C. Daman Chanshi 大滿禅師; J. Daiman Zenji). This is the posthumous honorary title of Hongren 弘忍 (J. Kōnin; 601–674), the Fifth 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, with one significant exception, is nearly identical to a passage that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Thirty-first Ancestor, Great Master Daoxin”:

A Chinese passage that corresponds to this is also quoted in the “Buddha-Nature” (Bussō 佛性) chapter of Dōgen's Treasury of the True Dharma Eye:

In these (and many other) older recensions of the passage, Hongren replies to Daoxin’s initial inquiry about his name with the words, “As for a family name, I have one” (C. xing ji you 姓即有; J. sei wa sunawachi aredomo 姓は即ち有れども). Here in the Denkōroku, however, Hongren replies, “As for inherent nature, I have it” (C. xing ji you 姓即有; J. sei wa sunawachi aredomo 姓は即ち有れども). As explained in the following footnote, that is a mistake in the text of the Denkōroku.

3 “What is your family name?” (C. ru he xing 汝何姓; J. nanji nan no sei naru 汝何の姓なり). The dialogue that begins with this question by Daoxin employs a pun on the words “family name” (C. xing 姓; J. sei, shō) and “inherent nature” (C. xing 性; J. sei, shō), which are perfect homonyms (including the tone) in spoken Chinese. In the original (correct) Chinese text, Hongren says, “As for a xing 姓 [family name], I have one, but it is not an ordinary xing 姓 [family name] …. It is foxing 佛性 [buddha-nature].” The pun is that, when only heard (and not read), the words foxing 佛性 [buddha-nature] could be taken to mean Foxing 佛姓 [family name “Buddha”]. The pun continues in the next exchange, when Daoxin asks: “So, you have no xing 姓 [family name]?” Hongren deliberately takes that to mean, “So, you have no xing 性 [inherent nature]?” Thus he answers, “xing 性 [inherent nature] is empty, so I don’t have it.” In the Chinese
The Master [Hongren] said, “As for inherent nature, I have it, but it is not an ordinary family name.” The Ancestor [Daoxin] said, “What family name is it?” The Master said, “It is buddha-nature.” The Ancestor [Daoxin] said, “So, you have no family name?” The Master [Hongren] said, “Inherent nature is empty, so I do not have it.” The Ancestor [Daoxin] was silent, recognizing that he [Hongren] was a vessel of the dharma.

He [Daoxin] bequeathed him the dharma and robe.

**Pivotal Circumstances**

The Master [Hongren]

It would seem, therefore, that the editorial mistake originates with the 1857 woodblock edition, or the manuscripts on which it was based.

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 *Collated Essentials of the Five Flame Records* under the heading “Fifth Ancestor, Great Master Hongren”:

《五燈會元》贄州黃梅人也。先為破頭山中栽松道者。甞請於四祖曰。法道可得聞乎。祖曰。汝已老。未有聞。其能廣化邪。若再來。吾尚可遲汝。廬去。行水邊。見一女子浣衣。揖曰。寄宿得否。女曰。我有父兄。可往求之。曰。諾我。即敢行。女首肯之。遂回䇿而去。女周氏季子也。歸楙妊。父母大惡。逐之。女無所歸。日佣織。踰於眾館之下。已而生一子。以爲不祥。因棄諸港中。（CBETA, X80, no. 1565, p. 45, b12-19 // Z 2B:11, p. 18, b15-c4 // R138, p. 35, b15-p. 36, a4).
was a man of Huangmei District in Qizhou Prefecture. In a previous life he [Hongren] had been the Pine-Planting Practitioner on Mount Potou. Once he [the Pine-Planting Practitioner] made a request of the Fourth Ancestor [Daoxin], saying, “Might I be able to hear you speak some dharma words?” The Ancestor [Daoxin] said, “You are already old. Even if you were able to hear, would you be able to proselytize widely? If you come again [in a future life], I am sure to still be waiting for you.” Thereupon he [the Pine-Planting Practitioner] went to the water’s edge, where he saw a young woman washing clothes. Bowing with hands clasped, he said, “May I rely on you for lodging or not?”\(^1\) The woman said, “I have a father and an older brother; I must go and make this request to them.” He said, “If you approve, then I will be so bold as to proceed.” The woman nodded in agreement. Finally, he twirled his staff and left.\(^2\) The woman was the youngest child of the Zhou Clan. She returned home pregnant. Her father and mother, being greatly disgusted with her, kicked her out. The woman, with no place to go, spent her days in the village spinning thread and her nights lodging at a public inn. Finally, she gave birth to a child. Thinking him unlucky, she discarded him in the filthy harbor.

\(^1\) “May I rely on you for lodging, or not?” (kishuku shi eten, inaya 寄宿し得てん, 否や). There is a double entendre here. The request, on the face of it, is for a place to spend the night. However, what the old man is seeking is a womb into which he can be reborn, so as to meet the Fourth Ancestor again.

\(^2\) Finally, he twirled his staff and left (tsui ni saku wo megurashite saru 逐に策を回して去る). This is a double entendre, with a barely disguised reference to sexual intercourse. In Chinese, the verb sui 逐 (J. sui) means to “have one’s way” or “satisfy” one’s desire; in the Japanese transcription here, however, it is used adverbially and just means “finally” (tsui ni 逐に). The “cane” or “staff” (C. ce 策; J. saku) mentioned here is an implement that Chinese monks sometimes carried, but in the present context it is also an obvious phallic symbol. The old man “rotated” or “twirled” (C. hui 回; J. megurasu 回す) it and left, and the woman somehow ended up pregnant. Whether that happened in the usual biological way or magically, the reader is left to decide.
He went against the current, and his body did not sink. He was protected by spiritual forces, and for seven days escaped injury. The “spiritual forces” referred to were two birds who spread their wings and covered him during the daytime, and two dogs who knelt beside him and guarded him at night. His life force and body were vividly fresh, and his six sense faculties were without flaw. His mother saw this and, regarding it as a miracle, raised and nourished him. As he grew older, he begged for food with his mother. People called him the “child without a family name.” One learned person said, “This child lacks seven kinds of marks and does not reach the level of a tathāgata.”

Subsequently, 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 “Thirty-first Ancestor, Great Master Daoxin”:

《景德傳燈錄》一日往黃梅縣路逢一小兒。骨相奇秀異乎常童。師問曰。子何姓。答曰姓即有不是常姓。師曰。是何姓。答曰。是佛性。師曰。汝無性耶。答曰。性空故。師默識其法器。即俾侍者至其家。於父母所乞令出家。(T2076.51.222b10-15).

The Japanese transcription, however, skips part of the Chinese text that has already been cited above in the Root Case.
he [Hongren] encountered the Fourth Ancestor [Daoxin] on the road to Huangmei. The Fourth Ancestor, thinking that this boy’s [Hongren’s] bone structure was unusually excellent and unlike those of an ordinary boy, asked him: “What is your family name?”... and so on, down to...1 The Ancestor [Daoxin] was silent, recognizing that he [Hongren] was a vessel of the dharma. He asked the mother if [the boy] could become his acolyte, and had him go forth from household life.

At that time, he [Hongren] was in his seventh year. Then, from the time when he received a robe and was ordained, got dharma transmission, and went forth from household life, throughout the twelve periods of the day there was never even a moment of the day or night when he was not glued to his meditation cushion. Although he did not neglect other duties, he continually sat in this manner.

Finally,2

during the 2nd year of the Shangyuan Era,3 he told his disciples, “My affairs are already complete; I must now pass away.” Saying this, he died while sitting.

1 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.

2 Finally (tsui ni 終に). 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 “Thirty-second Ancestor, Great Master Hongren”:

《景德傳燈錄》上元二年 (乙亥歲乃唐高宗時也。至肅宗時復有上元年號。其二年歲在辛丑也), 忽告衆曰。吾今事畢時可行矣。(T 2076.51.223a29-b1).

3 2nd year of the Shangyuan Era (C. Shangyuan er nian 上元二年; J. Jōgen ni nen). The year corresponds roughly to 675.
Investigation

There is a “family name”¹ that is not received from one’s father, not received from one’s forebears, not inherited from the buddhas, and not inherited from the ancestors: it is called “buddha-nature.” To inquire into Zen and study the way is, at root, for the purpose of penetrating through to what is fundamental, and greatly clarifying the mind-nature. If you do not reach the fundamental, you will have lived uselessly and will die uselessly, deluding self and deluding others. When we speak of so-called original nature, it means that all of you people — although you change shape through death after death, birth after birth, and face after face — are, from hour to hour and moment to moment, never unendowed with perfectly complete wisdom. We know this from the episode we have been speaking of today.

From his former life, when the Pine-Planting Practitioner asked to hear some dharma words, down to the present life, when as a seven-year-old youth he was transmitted the robe and dharma, there was certainly no transformation of mind due to birth. How could there be any alteration of inherent nature due to outward appearances? Chan Master Hongzhi’s “portrait eulogy for Great Master Hongren” says:² “Before and after, two bodies; past and present, one mind.”

¹ “family name” (shō 姓). This continues the pun established in the Root Case, playing on the fact that the glyphs xìng 姓 (J. shō) and xìng 性 (J. shō) are homonyms. For a full explanation, see the note to the Root Case of this chapter, #3 on p. 282.

² “portrait eulogy for Great Master Hongren” (Nin Daishi shinsan 忍大師真贊). A record of the full eulogy, which was inscribed on a mortuary portrait of Hongren, appears in the Extensive Record of Chan Master Hongzhi:

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Although he exchanged his body for a second one, in past and present there was no separate mind. You should know that, from innumerable kalpas past, it has only been “such.” If you are able to penetrate the essence of this original nature, then this inherent nature is from the start not something that should be analyzed using the category of four classes,¹ because the four classes all have the same inherent nature. Because the original nature is like this, when members of any of the four classes happen to go forth from household life, all alike are called members of the Śākya Clan. This makes it known that there is no difference among them.

Truly, this² is not separate from me, and it is not separate from you: it merely puts on the face of self or other, exactly like the earlier and later bodies [of Hongren]. If you are unable to clarify mind by distinguishing things in this way, you will mistakenly call it “my own self” and “what is before my eyes,” drawing a distinction between one’s own person and the persons of others. As a result, you feel attachment to every thing that comes along and over time become deluded and confused. Nevertheless, if you are once able to clarify this standpoint, then even if you change form and are reborn, how could there be any obstruction of self or transformation of mind?

¹ four classes (C. sixing 四姓; J. shisei; S. cāturvarṇya). Although the topic here is the Indian notion of social “class” (S. varṇa), the glyph that is used to translate varṇa into Chinese is the same as that used earlier in this chapter with the meaning of “family name” (C. xing 姓; J. sbō, sei). Thus, in the Japanese text of the Denkōroku, the mention of the Indian class system here does not seem like an abrupt change of subject, as it does in English translation.

² this (kore 是れ). The referent, the subject of this sentence, is “this original nature” (kono honshō 北本性).
We know this from the story of the [Pine-Planting] Practitioner and the youth [Hongren]. He was actually born without a father. Thus we know that a person is not necessarily born receiving the bloodlines of father and mother. That being the case, you should know that although the body, hair, and skin that you have regarded with feelings of attachment are received from your father and mother, this body is not the five aggregates. If you understand personhood in this way, there is no one who accompanies “me,” nor can there ever be a time, not even an instant, when there is another who is different than self. Therefore an ancient said,1 “From innumerable kalpas past, all living beings have never emerged from the dharma-nature samādhi.” If you can experience things in this way and can tread in this way, then you will quickly have a face-to-face encounter with the Fourth Ancestor and will get to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Fifth Ancestor. Yamato [Japan] and Han [China] will not be separated, and past and present will not be divided.

且らく作摩生か指注して、此道理に相應することを得ん。
Now then, how should I comment so as to accord with this principle?

VERSE ON THE OLD CASE 【頌古】

月明水潔秋天浄。豈有片雲點大清。
The moon is bright, the water pure, the autumn heavens clear:
how could there be “a bit of cloud to punctuate the great clarity”?2

1 an ancient said (kōjin iwaku 古人曰く). The quotation that follows is traditionally attributed to Mazu Daoyi 馬祖道一 (J. Baso Dōitsu; 709–788). → “From innumerable kalpas past, all living beings have never emerged from the samādhi of dharma-nature.”
2 “a bit of cloud to punctuate the great clarity” (C. pian yun dian taiqing 片雲點太清; J. hen un ten taisei). This quotation is a line from the Heroic March Sutra: 《首楞嚴經》當知虛空生汝心內。猶如片雲點太清裏。況諸世界在虛空耶。(T 945.19.147b8-10).