

Record of Going Easy

(J. Shoyoroku)

Case 96: Jiufeng Does Not Agree

Presenting to the assembly, saying:

Yúnjū did not rely on relics.¹ Jiufēng did not like “die sitting, die standing.” Niútóu did not need hundreds of birds with flowers in their beaks.² Huángbò did not envy floating across the river on a cup.³ But say, what special strong points did they have?

舉 Jiufēng attended Shíshuāng. After Shuāng died, many wanted the Head Seat to succeed him as abbot.

Emulate Huineng having no scheme; do not respond like Shenxui brushing dust away.

Fēng did not agree and said, “Wait until I’ve examined him. If he can pass through our late teacher’s meaning, I will also serve him.”

Seeing injustice on the road.

Then Fēng asked, “Our late teacher’s way: ‘Stop; Rest;

Spending a great deal of effort!

One *nen*, ten-thousand years;

Forget the future, lose the past.

Become cold ash, dead tree;

Have what breath.

Practice being one strip of white.’

Forsaking a speck of dust.

How do you understand this side of the matter?”

If only there were no matter.

“I understand this as the one-color side of things.”

Two kinds too.

Fēng said, “This expression is not in harmony with our late teacher’s meaning.”

One morning you will hold the authority.

The Head Seat said, “You don’t agree. Light a stick of incense.

Really improbable.

If I don’t understand our late teacher’s meaning, I won’t be able to die while this incense is still burning.”

Gasping for breath - murdered.

His words finished, with ease he sat and dropped.

Here in this place, you go and die like this?

¹ From Complete Poison Blossoms: Once Zen master Yünju had an attendant take a pair of trousers to a monk who was living by himself in a grass hut. The monk refused the trousers. He explained that “he already had the pair he was born with.” When Yünju was informed of the monk’s reply, he sent the attendant back to ask the question, “What did you wear prior to your birth?” The monk could give no answer. Later, when the monk died and his body was cremated, relics were found among his ashes.

When these were shown to Yünju, he said, “**I’d much rather have had one phrase from him in response to the question I asked when he was alive than ten bushels of relics from a dead man.**”

² See Ferguson: Daoxin: “... Saw a strange celestial sign in the distance and realized that an unusual person must be living on Niutou Mountain. He personally climbed the mountain to find the person and pay him a visit.... He found Niutou sitting upright in meditation, completely self-absorbed, paying no attention to Daoxin whatsoever. [Daoxin taught him:] “... When there is not a single teaching left, then you are just left to abide in your own nature; with no need to worry about your behavior; no need to practice cleansing austerities; but just living a life without desires; with a mind without anger, without cares; completely at ease and without impediment; acting according to your own will; without needing to take on any good or evil affairs; just walking, abiding, sitting, and lying down; with whatever meets your eye being nothing other than the essential source; and all of it is but the sublime function of Buddha; blissful and without care. This is called ‘Buddha.’” After Niutou received this teaching from Daoxin and fully attained the way of Zen, birds no longer left flowers for him. Niutou’s enlightenment left no special sign by which it could be recognized.

³ When one of Huangbo’s students compared his study with Huangbo to a cup floating across the river, Huangbo said, “Although I have a pair of hands with nothing to do, I have never used them to salute idle people. See *A Bird in Flight Leaves No Trace: The Zen Teaching of Huangbo*.

Fēng caressed his back, saying, "To die sitting, die standing, is not nothing.

To be born like this may be easy.

But as far as our late teacher's meaning, you hadn't seen it even in a dream."

Shedding the style will be difficult.

The teacher [Wànsōng] said,

Zen master Jiǔfēng Dàoqián⁴ of Yún Province intimately transmitted the Way of Shíshuāng.⁵ He had the staff that kills and gives life, and the kesa-wearing monk's hooked nose.⁶ The Head Seat was a board carrying fellow with just one chopstick.

If when they met and [Jiǔfēng] said, "This expression is not in harmony with our late teacher's meaning," the Head Seat had simply said, "I am not equal to you." Then Jiǔfēng would have found nowhere to hide his body and would have submitted wholeheartedly. Haven't you heard, "When you wrangle, there isn't enough. When you yield, there is abundance."

Nowadays, people who practice and study just say, "Ancient people died sitting, died standing. Modern people at the point of departure are flustered and confused."

However, when Minister Ōuyáng Wénzhōng met the old monk Sōngshān, he said, "Modern people *are* confused in every thought moment (nen nen). When one foot is in the grave, it's a good time to completely focus the mind. Entirely turn and inquire - what is momentary birth, momentary death?"

Juéfàn's⁷ verse says,

When it's time to die, die completely - immediately die completely
"Die sitting, die standing" - boastful kids
Fresh milk becomes sour milk - there is no other dharma
When it's time to die, why bother prophesying?

Two imperial ministers asked Bǎofēng Zhào Ōshō,⁸ "When ancient people had one foot in the grave, they lived or died at ease. How did they do it?"

Fēng said, "Monks from former times will return and hang themselves to death."

When Fēng was approaching death, the assembly of monks sought for Fēng's deathbed instructions[, the essence of his transmitted teachings]. Fēng spoke a few curse words, then died. If Shíshuāng's Head Seat had left for this place, he would have avoided being hounded to death by Jiǔfēng.

Fóguǒ [aka Dàhuì Zōnggǎo] went up [to the hall] and presented a shining dharma talk for people, saying,

"Sigh. I see a stream of wild fox families tapping blindly, who surely haven't yet seen the Founder even in their dreams. Yet they rashly transmit the 'womb breath' and claim it was used and taught by Bodhidharma. They call this transmitting dharma and saving deluded beings. They even cite long-lived lineage masters like National Teacher Ān and Zhào zhōu all practiced this breath. Further they say Pūhuā's empty coffin is an indication of this technique. They further claim that this technique can result in freedom from the whole

⁴ 九峰道虔 Jiufēng (jyu-fung) Daoqian (n.d.), 12th generation in China through Shitou, Yàoshān, Daowu, and Shíshuāng.

⁵ 石霜慶諸 Shíshuāng Qīngzhū (807-88), 11th generation in China through Shitou, Yàoshān, and Daowu, not 石霜楚圓 Shíshuāng Chūyuán, an important but later teacher in the Linchi line.

⁶ Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (DDB): A Chan term, which is understood as the nose of an ox or some such, which has a hook through which a rope can be tied.

⁷ DDB excerpt: (1071-1128) A monk of the Huanglong branch of the Linji school (an ancestor in Dogen's Rinzaï lineage). At the age of fourteen, he lost both his parents and entered the order under Sanfeng Qing. Upon completing his studies, he began the practice of Chan under Zhenjing Kewen and became his dharma heir. During the Buddhist persecutions (1102-1106) of Emperor Huizong (r. 1100-1125), he was imprisoned four times and was eventually exiled. During this period, he was helped by his lay patrons, most notably by Prime Minister Zhang Shangying and General Guo Tianmin. When he returned from exile, he devoted himself to writing. He was posthumously given the name Baojue Yuanming.

⁸ A successor of Furong Daokai.

body at death, causing both body and spirit to become sublime. Because thick people love this body, they live in fear and trepidation about the end of life.

“So they compete to transmit the dharma of ‘returning to the truth.’ Doing away with the shadow on the night of the full moon, they call this the original self. Divining the sun and moon they listen to the tower drum and examine the jade pond. Investigating the glint of the eye, they take it to be the dharma of sloughing off life-death. Truly, at the village gate, they dupe and scare people, encouraging them to grasp onto a counterfeit nest. They present as lofty people scoffing at the lowly.

“Again, there is another kind, who pretend the first ancestor spoke of the womb breath. They say Zhàozhōu’s “Song of Twelve Hours” and Layman Páng’s verse, “Turn the River Cart,” pass on the instructions for the secret transmission for continual practice and reveal the pattern for long life and throwing off the whole body. They hope to live three-to-five hundred years, but scarcely realize this is truly a deluded attachment to views.”

Wànsōng says, These days, looking at all those who use this method, I see many important people employing the point of departure for inquiry [like the above examples by Fógǔō], like tending to a goiter by applying misty rouge. What happiness is there in this?

Throughout Shíshuāng’s life, he established a dead tree hall and a dead tree assembly, in most cases, practitioners sat constantly without lying down. Those who died sitting or died standing were extremely numerous.

Jiufēng alone did not agree with the Head Seat. Those today inclined to “die sitting, die standing,” why not instead engage with Jiufēng’s disagreement?

Yet say, what is the impact of Jiufēng’s functioning?

Ask Tiāntóng:

Verse

Shíshuāng’s one school

Bees gather; ants congregate

Intimately transmitted to Jiǔfēng

Melting like ice; breaking like tiles

Incense smoke drifts away

Not without freedom in birth and death

The true blood vein is difficult to communicate

“Our late teacher’s meaning - not in a dream”

Crane nesting on the moon - a thousand year dream

A falling tree doesn’t fly

In the snowy room, the man is confused about the achievement of one color

The one event after sunrise - You! You!

Sitting and breaking the ten directions as if [brushing] a speck on the forehead

Forsaking the life root

Intimately taking one step nurtures the flying dragon

Extraordinary good fortune

The teacher [Wànsōng] said:

Tiāntóng’s altruism and justice are the first to go when the going gets rough. The way of the world leans toward those from wealthy families.

Wànsōng says the Zen school’s teaching methods are provisionally established. [The Head Seat] is not equal to Jiufēng in entering the essence. In terms of conversing intimately, he’s one hundred steps behind.

Shèngmò Ōshō wrote in *Ancestors Singing Narrative Poems in the Main Hall*:

The Head Seat died uselessly while one stick of incense burned
Jiufēng did not restrain the venerable
If you claim that attaining one color was receiving the transmission
You betray the former teacher's non reliance on conditions.

Shíshuāng once presented this, saying, "Never forget illumination, because 'outside transmission' is the minister type. This is also called dependence. You were born without the slightest bit of separation, as if a sovereign had been born. Your task is to transmit this great condition. This is called 'inside transmission,' or the 'sovereign seed,' or a 'statement without dependence.' Dependence, then, is on the one-color side of the matter and that is all. We have no choice but to accord with the opportunity, giving benefit to living beings, serving by holding and carrying [this transmission.]"

Also, at the Yǔ Gate a fish changes into a flying dragon with a marked forehead. And in the *Book of Changes* "Continual" hexagram, with a positive in the fifth position, means "a flying dragon is in the sky" - a symbol for obtaining this position. How does this compare with the crane nesting on the moon's dream? Or the confusion of the man in the snowy room?

Even more, do you know what Shíshuāng transmitted to Jiufēng?

Borrow the broken incense sachet that perfumes the whole country. Poke a hole in the sky and roar like the true wind.