

8 BAIZHANG'S "FOX"

INTRODUCTION If you keep so much as the letter *a* in your mind, you'll go to hell like an arrow shot; one drop of wild fox slobber, when swallowed, cannot be spit out for thirty years. It is not that the order is strict in India; it's just that the ignoramus's karma is heavy. Has there ever been anyone who mistakenly transgressed?

CASE When Baizhang lectured in the hall, there was always an old man who listened to the teaching and then dispersed with the crowd. One day he didn't leave; Baizhang then asked him, "Who is it standing there?"

The old man said, "In antiquity, in the time of the ancient Buddha Kasyapa, I lived on this mountain. A student asked, 'Does a greatly cultivated man still fall into cause and effect or not?' I answered him, 'He does not fall into cause and effect,' and I fell into a wild fox body for five hundred lives. Now I ask the teacher to turn a word in my behalf."

Baizhang said, "He is not blind to cause and effect."

The old man was greatly enlightened at these words.

COMMENTARY On Baizhang Mountain in Hong prefecture, every time Chan Master Dazhi ascended the high seat, there was always an old man listening to his teaching. The old man had dwelt on this mountain in the time of Kasyapa Buddha; because he had answered a student mistakenly, up to the present he had degenerated into a wild fox being. Indeed it was because he himself leaned on a fence and stuck to a wall, sending people off to fall into a pit and plunge into a ditch.

He saw that Dazhi had the skill to pull out nails and draw out pegs, so he forsook himself and followed the other, asking Dazhi to turn a word in his behalf. Dazhi gave a fearless explanation, lightly turning and saying, "He is not blind to cause and effect." The old man was greatly enlightened at these words. He based his logic on actuality; not falling into cause and effect is forced denial, a nihilistic view; not being blind to cause and effect is finding the wondrous along with the flow. ✓

Those who understand the vehicle of the teachings see immediately when this is brought up, but though they shed their hair clothes, they're still wearing scale armor. Have you not heard it told how when Chan Master Yuan was in the assembly of Chan Master Hui he heard two monks bring up this story; one monk said, "Even if he's not blind to cause and effect, he still hasn't shed the wild fox body." The other monk replied, "Just this is not falling into cause and effect—and when has he ever fallen into cause and effect?" The master was startled and considered these words unusual; he hurried to the bamboo cluster hermitage on Mount Huangbo—as he crossed a valley stream he was suddenly enlightened. He saw Master Nan and told what happened; before he finished tears were streaming over his jaws. Master Nan made him sleep soundly on the attendants' bench; but suddenly he got up and wrote a verse:

*Not falling, not blind;
For monks or layfolk there are no taboos.
The bearing of a freeman is like a king's—
How can he accept the enclosure of a bag or covering by a lid?
One staff can be horizontal or vertical—
The wild fox leaps into the company of the golden lion.*

Master Nan laughed.

Seeing it in this way, when we first see him say, "I now ask you to turn a word for me," hopefully he would have said, "He does not fall into cause and effect," to avoid causing beginners to fall into the pit of understanding.

In the evening Baizhang went into the hall and recounted the preceding events; Huangbo immediately asked, "An ancient answered a turning word mistakenly and fell into a wild fox body for five hundred lives;

what's in his own heart, saying, "Understand?" But I ask, does Tiantong understand? "If you are clear and free, there's no objection to my babble." Fortunately he has status—what chore would he not do for others? Babble, "dada wawa," is baby talk—representing that it is not real speech. Also the *Weir of Interpretation of the Lotus of Reality* says, "Dada is a symbol of learning action; wawa is a symbol of learning speech." In the *Great Demise Scripture* there is 'sickness practice' and 'baby practice.' Some books say 'baba wawa.' Chan Master Shandao of Shishi said, "Among the sixteen practices in the *Great Demise*, the baby practice is best." All this is the same meaning as the "spirit songs and shrine dances." But tell me, what is the harmony?

*Ten thousand pipes you cannot hear if you have mind;
On a solitary cliff without ears then you know the sound.*