

CHAPTER SEVEN (*Dai nana shō* 第七章)

ROOT CASE¹ 【本則】

第七祖、婆須密多尊者、置酒器於彌遮迦尊者前、作禮而立。尊者問曰、爲是我器、爲是汝器。師思惟。尊者曰、爲是我器者、汝之本有性。若復汝器、我法汝當受。師聞大悟無生本性。

The Seventh Ancestor, Venerable Vasumitra, placed a wine vessel² before Venerable Miśraka, bowed courteously, and stood. The Venerable [Miśraka] said, “Is this my vessel, or is this your vessel?” The Master [Vasumitra] reflected on this. The Venerable [Miśraka] said, “If you regard it as my vessel, then this is your ‘originally existing nature.’³ If, on the other hand, it is your vessel, then you should receive my *dharma*.” When the Master [Vasumitra] heard this he greatly awakened to the non-arising original nature.

PIVOTAL CIRCUMSTANCES 【機縁】

師は北印度の人なり。姓は頗羅檀。常に淨衣を服す。手に酒器を持して閭里に遊行し、或は吟じ或は嘯く。人、之を狂と謂ふ。

¹ **Root Case** (C. *benze* 本則; J. *honsoku*). The source of this Chinese passage is unknown.

² **wine vessel** (C. *jiuqi* 酒器; J. *shuki*). A vessel, probably a bottle or jug with a stopper that is suitable for carrying around liquid without spilling, used to hold an alcoholic beverage such as beer or wine (C. *jiu* 酒; J. *shu*). The fifth rule in both the ten novice precepts for monks and nuns and the five precepts for Buddhist laymen and laywomen is “not to drink alcohol” (C. *bu yinjiu* 不飲酒; J. *fu onju*; S. *suramereyya-majjapamādaṭṭhānāver*). Vasumitra, who is said later in this chapter to have made free use of his wine vessel both day and night, is thus in clear violation of the moral rules.

³ “If you regard it as my vessel, then this is your ‘originally existing nature’” (C. *wei shi wo qi zhe, ru zhi ben you xing* 爲是我器者、汝之本有性; J. *kore waga utsuwa to nasaba, nanji no hon'u no shō nari* 是我我が器と爲さば、汝の本有の性なり). The Japanese reading given here, and the English translation that accords with it, follows the Shūmuchiō edition of the *Denkōroku*. However, it is also possible to translate *ben you xing* 本有性 as “truly having own-nature” (*moto ni shō ga aru* 本に性がある). The latter makes more sense in this context because, if the wine vessel belongs to Venerable Miśraka, then that would mean that Vasumitra had given it to him as a gift, and to do so would betray a deluded belief in the own-nature of *dharma*s. If, however, it was not given as a gift (because Vasumitra understood the emptiness of *dharma*s), then it still belongs to Vasumitra, and he has proved himself a true vessel of the *dharma*, i.e. a disciple worthy of becoming a *dharma* heir. → original nature.

The Master [Vasumitra]¹ was a man of North India, and his clan was Bhāradvāja. He always wore a pure robe. In his hand he carried a wine vessel as he wandered about the village, sometimes singing, sometimes whistling. People called him crazy.

姓名を顯さず。然るに彌遮迦尊者、

He did not reveal his clan name. As it happened, Venerable Miśraka,²

遊化して北天竺國に至る。雉堞の上を見るに金色の祥雲ありて起る。尊者、徒衆に謂て曰く、是れ道人の氣なり、是れ必ず大士ありて吾法嗣たらんと。

when wandering about teaching, arrived in a country of North India. Looking over the city walls, he saw gold-colored auspicious clouds arising. The Venerable [Miśraka] addressed the congregation of followers, saying, “That is the *qi*³ of a person of the way. It is surely a great being who will become my *dharma heir*.”

言、未だ了らざるに師即ち到て、乃ち問て曰く、

He had not finished speaking those words when the Master [Vasumitra] arrived and asked,⁴

¹ **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 “Seventh Ancestor, Vasumitra”:

《景德傳燈錄》北天竺國人也。姓頗羅墮。常服淨衣執酒器遊行里閤。或吟或嘯人謂之狂。(T 2076.51.208b11-13).

² **Venerable Miśraka** (Miśhaka Sonja 彌遮迦尊者). 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 “Sixth Ancestor, Venerable Miśraka”:

《景德傳燈錄》遊化至北天竺國。見雉堞之上有金色祥雲。歎曰。斯道人氣也。必有大士爲吾法嗣。(T. 2076.51.208a16-18).

³ *qi* (*qi* 氣). The original meaning of *qi* 氣 in Chinese is “breath,” “air,” “steam,” or “vapor”; hence the reference to “clouds” of an auspicious golden color. However, *qi* 氣 also came to refer to the invisible life-force, a vital energy that was present whenever someone was breathing, and dissipated at death.

⁴ **asked** (*iwaku* 曰く). The following question and answer 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 “Sixth Ancestor, Venerable Miśraka”:

《景德傳燈錄》曰識我手中物否。師曰。此是觸器而負淨者。(T 2076.51.208a21).

我手中の物を知るや否や。尊者曰く、是れ觸器にして淨者に背く。

“Do you know what *thing*¹ it is that I have in my hand?” The Venerable [Miśraka] said, “It is an *unclean vessel*, inappropriate for those who are pure.”

師、乃ち

The Master [Vasumitra] thereupon²

酒器を彌遮迦尊者の前に置く。乃至、大に無生本性を悟る。

Placed a wine vessel before Venerable Miśraka... and so on, down to...³ greatly awakened to the non-arising original nature.

時に酒器忽然として見へず。尊者又

At that moment, suddenly, the wine vessel could no longer be seen. The Venerable [Miśraka] also⁴

謂て曰く、汝試みに自ら名氏を稱せよ。吾、嘗に後に本因を示すべし。師、偈を説て答ふ、「我從無量劫。至于生此國。本姓頗羅墮。名字婆須蜜。」時尊者示して曰く、我が師提多迦説たまふ。世尊昔し北印度に遊び、阿難に語て言ひ、此國中に吾が滅後三百年にして一の聖人あり。姓は頗羅墮、名は婆須蜜。而も禪祖に於て

¹ *thing* (C. *wu* 物; J. *motsu*, *mono*). This word is key to understanding the passage, because the Chan/Zen tradition stands on the proposition that “from the start, there is not a single thing.” That saying, attributed to the Sixth Ancestor, Huineng, in the *Platform Sūtra*, expresses the Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness. When Miśraka calls it an “unclean vessel,” there is a double meaning. The first, of course, is that a wine vessel is impure, and that having one is a violation of monastic precepts. The other meaning is that to believe in really existing “things” — i.e. *dharma*s that possess “own-nature” — is to “pollute” one’s own mind with deluded thinking.

² *The Master thereupon* (*Shi, sunawachi* 師、乃ち). The block of text that follows these words is a quotation of this chapter’s Root Case.

³ *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.

⁴ *The Venerable also* (*Sonja mata* 尊者又). 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 “Sixth Ancestor, Venerable Miśraka”:

《景德傳燈錄》謂曰。汝試自稱名氏。吾當後示本因。彼人説偈而答。我從無量劫。至于生此國。本姓頗羅墮。名字婆須蜜。師曰。我師提多迦説。世尊昔遊北印度。語阿難言。此國中吾滅後三百年有一聖人。姓頗羅墮。名婆須蜜。而於禪祖當獲第七。世尊記汝。汝應出家。彼乃置器禮師側立而言曰。我思往劫嘗作檀那。獻一如來寶坐。彼佛記我云。汝於賢劫釋迦法中。(T 2076.51.208a22-b1).

當に第七を獲べしと。世尊、汝を記す。汝應に出家すべし。師聞て曰く、我れ往劫を思ふに、嘗て檀那となりて如來に一の寶座を獻ず。彼佛、我を記して曰く、汝賢劫釋迦牟尼佛の法中に於て、
addressed [Vasumitra], saying, “Try telling me your name, and I will then have to tell you the *karmic* cause.¹ The Master [Vasumitra] replied by reciting a verse:

For innumerable *kalpas*,
until being born in this land,
my original clan has been Bhāradvāja,
and my name is Vasumitra.

At that time, the Venerable [Mīśraka] instructed him, saying, “My master, Dhītika, told me that the World-Honored One, while traveling in North India long ago, spoke to Ānanda saying, ‘In this kingdom, three hundred years after my *nirvāṇa*, there will be a sage. His clan will be Bhāradvāja, his name will be Vasumitra, and he will surely become number seven among the *Chan* ancestors.’ The World-Honored One made a prediction concerning you. You should go forth from household life.” The Master [Vasumitra] listened and said, “As I think of past *kalpas*, I [recall that I] once was a donor and presented a *tathāgata* with a jeweled seat. That *buddha* gave me a prophecy, saying, “During the *dharma* of Śākyamuni Buddha in the *kalpa* of worthies

聖位を續ぐべしと。之に依て卒に第七の祖に列なる。

you will succeed to a sagely position.” As a result of this he came to join the succession as the Seventh Ancestor.

INVESTIGATION 【拈提】

師、未だ學者の所に至らざる時、十二時中酒器を持して棄ることなし。實に是れ表準なり。此器朝にも要し、暮にも要し、受用無礙なり。實に是れ其器たることを表す。

Prior to the Master [Vasumitra] arriving in the presence of the Venerable [Mīśraka], throughout the twelve periods of the day he held onto the wine vessel without ever discarding it. Truly it was his standard mark. That vessel, being needed in the morning and needed in the evening, was received

¹ *karmic cause* (C. *benyin* 本因; J. *hon'in*). That is to say, the past actions that led to the meeting of Vasumitra and Mīśraka, or perhaps to the sudden disappearance of the wine vessel, in particular.

and used by him without obstruction. Truly it represented the fact that he was the “appropriate vessel.”¹

之に依て參學の最初に問て云く、我が手中の物を識るや否やと。設ひ心是道と會し、身是佛なりと明らむるとも、尚ほ是れ觸器なる故に、若し觸器ならば必ず淨者には負くべし。

On account of this, at the very start of his study, he [Vasumitra] asked, “Do you know what *thing* it is that I have in my hand?” Even if one understands that “*mind* is the way” and clarifies that “*body* is *buddha*,” this is still an *unclean vessel*. So, if it is an *unclean vessel*, it certainly should be eschewed by those who are pure.

古今に互るとも會せよ、未來具足とも知れ。皆是れ觸器なり。何の古とか説かん、何の今とか説かん。何を始と曰ひ、何を末と曰はん。是の如きの所見、必らず淨者には負くべし。理の最たるを聆て、師即ち酒器をさしおく。是れ即ち尊者に歸せし表準なり。

You should also understand that this [critique] extends to the past and the present, and you should also know [that it applies to] “future completeness.”² All of these [concepts] are *unclean vessels*. What “past” can we

¹ “appropriate vessel” (C. *qi qi* 其器; J. *sono ki*). There is an allusion here to a passage in the *Analects* of Confucius that speaks of the need for a ruler to select skilled people as ministers to carry out the work of government, acting on the principle of “humaneness” (C. *ren* 仁; J. *jin*):

Zigong asked about practicing humaneness. Confucius said, “A craftsman who wishes to do his work well must first prepare the appropriate vessels [i.e., his set of tools]. When you live in a state, serve the worthy among its leaders, and befriend the humane among its officials.”

《論語》子貢問爲仁。子曰、工欲善其事、必先利其器。居是邦也、事其大夫之賢者、友其士之仁者。(Analects 論語, Weiling Gong 15 衛靈公第十五, sec. 15.9)

The expression “appropriate vessel,” in this context, refers to able government ministers, *appropriate vessel*.

² “future completeness” (C. *weilai juzu* 未來具足; J. *mirai gusoku*). There is an allusion here to a passage from the *Sūtra of the Great Nirvāṇa*:

The Buddha said, “Excellent, excellent, good sons, that you should quickly raise such a question! The *buddha-nature* is like empty space in that it is neither past, nor future, nor present. All living beings have three kinds of bodies: past, future, and present. For living beings, it is their bodies of the future, completely adorned with purity, that will be able to see the *buddha-nature*.

《大般涅槃經》佛言。善哉善哉。善男子。快發斯問。佛性者猶如虛空。非過去非未來非現在。一切衆生有三種身。所謂過去未來現在。衆生未來具足莊嚴清淨之身得見佛性。(T 374.12.562c1-5).

speak of? What “present” can we speak of? What can we call “beginning,” and what can we call “end”? Views such as these necessarily go against *that which is pure*. Hearing the highest principle, the Master [Vasumitra] immediately put down the wine vessel. This symbolized that he had taken refuge in the Venerable [Miśraka].

是故に是れ我が器とやせん、是れ汝の器とやせんと問ひしなり。已に古今の論に非ず。去來のを見をも離る。此時に到て是れ我なりとやせん、是れ汝なりとやせん。是れ我にも非ず、是れ汝にも非ずと思惟せし所に、即ち示して曰く、我が器となさば汝の本有の性なり。然れば是れ彌遮迦の器にも非ず。若し復た汝が器ならば、我が法、汝受くべし。故に婆須密の器にも非ず。我と汝との器にも非ず。故に器また器に非ず。故に器即ち隠れぬ。

On this account [Miśraka] asked, “Do you regard this as my vessel, or do you regard it as your vessel?” This was no longer a matter of theorizing about “past” or “present.” It also had nothing to do with views of going or coming. Having arrived at this moment, would he regard it as “mine”? Would he regard it as “yours”? Just as [Vasumitra was] thinking “it is not mine” and “it is not yours,” [Miśraka] instructed him, saying, “If you regard it as my vessel, then this is your [belief in] originally existing nature.” That being so, it was not Miśraka’s vessel either. “If, on the other hand, it is your vessel, then you should receive my *dharma*.” Therefore, it was not Vasumitra’s vessel, either. It is neither my nor your vessel. Thus, the vessel is not a vessel. Thus, the vessel was hidden.

實に一段始終の因縁、今、人の能く知るべき所に非ず。設ひ参じ來り参じ去て、諸佛諸祖師、盡力不到の處に到ると雖も、是れ觸器なるべし。必らず淨者には負くべし。去れ眞箇の淨者は、淨もまた立せず。故に器また立せず。故に師資の道、相契ふ。通途無礙なる故に、我が法、汝受くべし。汝が本有の性なる故に、一法の他に受るなく、一法の人に授くるなし。恁麼に參徹するとき、師とも謂ふべし、資とも謂ふべし。故に子即ち師の頂に上り、師即ち子の足に下る。是時、兩物なく分析なし、故に器とも稱し難し。乃ち器隱る、此道の方に通ぜし表準なり。

Truly this episode, singular from start to finish, is not something that people these days can understand. Even if one *inquires when coming and inquires when going*, so that one reaches a place that no buddhas and no ancestral teachers can reach even by expending all their powers, this is an *impure vessel*. It certainly should be eschewed by those who are pure. Those who are genuinely pure do not set up even purity. Thus, they do not set up vessels, either. Thus, in the way of master and disciple, they match tallies. Because it is the open route without obstruction, [Miśraka said:] “You should receive my *dharma*.” Because it is “your originally existing

nature,” not a *single dharma* can be received from another and not a *single dharma* can be bestowed on another. When thoroughly investigating like this, [either] may be called “master” or called “disciple.” Thus, the disciple immediately rises to the master’s head, and the master immediately descends to the disciple’s feet. At that moment, both things cease to exist, and discrimination ceases, so that it is difficult to speak of a vessel. Thereupon, the vessel is hidden. This symbolizes the proper penetration of the way.

今日も若し此田地に到り得ば、從來の身心に非ず。故に古今に互るとも謂ひ難し。何に況や生死去來と稱するあらんや、皮肉骨髓を存することあらんや。實に是れ虚凝一片の田地、遂に表裏なく内外なし。

Today, if you are able to arrive at *this standpoint*, then you are not your former *body and mind*. Thus, it is also difficult to say “extend to the past and the present.” How much less can you refer to *birth and death*, or *going and coming*? Can *skin, flesh, bones, and marrow* even exist? Truly it is the *standpoint* of “a bit of *chimeric absorption*,” ultimately without front or back, interior or exterior.

今日、又卑語を着けて、適來の因縁を舉げんと思ふ。大衆、聞かんと要すや。

Today again I have *humble words* that I would like to attach to the aforementioned *episode*. Great assembly, do you wish to hear them?

VERSE ON THE OLD CASE 【頌古】

霜曉鐘如隨扣響。斯中元不要空盞。

If the frosty dawn bell reverberates following each strike,
then within it, from the start, there is no need of an empty cup.¹

¹ **empty cup** (C. *kongzhan* 空盞; J. *kūsan*). The “cup” (C. *zhan* 盞; J. *san*) referred to here, presumably, is the “wine vessel” that Vasumitra carried around and used before he met his teacher, Mīśraka. The mention in the previous line of a “bell” (C. *zhong* 鐘; J. *shō, kane*) that is struck at dawn may have been inspired by the fact that large Chinese temple bells, made of bronze and lacking internal clappers, are shaped like inverted cups.