CHAPTER SIX (Dai roku shō 第六章)

Root Case【本則】

第六祖、彌遮迦尊者。五祖因示日、佛言修仙學小、似繩牽挽。汝可自知、若棄小流、頓歸大海、當證無生。師聞契悟。

The Sixth Ancestor was Venerable Miśraka. The Fifth Ancestor [Dhitika] instructed him, saying, “The Buddha said that cultivating wizardry and training in the inferior is like pulling with a rope. You should know for yourself that if you abandon the small stream and instantly return to the great ocean, you will realize what is non-arising.” The Master [Miśraka] heard this, tallied and awakened.

Pivotal Circumstances【機縁】

師は中印度の人なり。

The Master [Miśraka] was a man of Central India.

八千の仙人の長者たり。一日、衆を率ひて提多迦尊者を瞻禮して曰く、吾れ昔し師と同く梵天に生ず。吾は阿私陀仙人に遇て仙法

1 Root Case (C. benze 本則; J. honsoku). The Chinese text given here is nearly identical to a passage that appears in the Outline of the Linked Flames of Our Lineage under the heading “Fifth Ancestor, Miśraka” (CBETA, X79, no. 1557, p. 18, c5-7 // Z 2B:9, p. 225, c11-13 // R136, p. 450, a9-13).

2 pulling with a rope (C. sheng qianwan 繩牽挽; J. nawa no kenban suru 繩の牽挽する). The force of this metaphor in the Chinese text of the Root Case is not clear. Later in this chapter of the Denkoroku Keizan twice interprets it as meaning a lack of liberation; being “dragged by a rope” through the round of birth and death. However, the point of the metaphor in the Root Case seems to be that cultivating wizardry and training in the inferior are ineffective practices that will not lead to liberation, just as “pulling with a rope” is a kind of effort that is difficult and unlikely to succeed. There is an ancient Chinese saying that appears in the History of the Latter Han:

Pulling the cart of one’s servant, one is unable to make it go.

牽挽臣車、使不得行。(Cited in DKJ 7:7559b).

The expression “pull with a rope” (C. sheng qianwan 繩牽挽) appears in the Discourse Record of Reverend Qianyan (CBETA, J32, no. B273, p. 228, a1-2), where it refers to pulling an ox with a rope, which works best if it is threaded through the powerful animal’s nostrils, causing it pain if it resists. That invokes the famous Ox-herding pictures, in which the ox symbolizes one’s own innate buddha-mind, which has become lost in the wilderness of delusion and must be recaptured and systematically disciplined.
He [Miśraka] was the leader of eight thousand wizards.¹ One day, he led the congregation in paying homage to Venerable Dhītika and said: “Long ago I was, as were you, Master, reborn in the Brahmā Heaven. I met the wizard Asita and learned wizardry from him. You, Master, met a disciple with ten powers and practiced dhyāna together with him. After that, our karmic fortunes were separated, and since we parted ways, already six kalpas have passed.” The Venerable [Dhitika] said, “It has been kalpas since we parted, but truly it was not in vain. Now, you should abandon the false, take refuge in the true, and enter the buddha-vehicle.” The Master [Miśraka] said: “Long ago, the wizard Asita gave me a prediction, saying, ‘After six kalpas, you will meet a fellow practitioner and thereby realize uncontaminated results.’ Is not our meeting one another now the result of karma from previous lives? Please, Reverend, through your compassion, liberate me.” The Venerable [Dhitika] thereupon had him go forth from household life and receive the full precepts. Those remaining in the assembly of wizards initially became arrogant. But then the Venerable [Dhitika] demonstrated his great supernormal powers, and based on that the assembly of wizards all gave rise to the thought of buddhi and simultaneously went forth from household life.

¹ leader of eight thousand wizards (hassen no sennin no chōja tari 八千の仙人の長者たち). The block of text that begins with these words is a Japanese transcription (yōmikudashi 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 “Fifth Ancestor, Venerable Dhītika”:

《景德傳燈錄》提多迦耶師妙偈設禮奉持。後至中印度。彼國有八千大仙。彌遮迦為首。聞尊者至率衆瞻禮。謂尊者曰。昔與師同生梵天。我遇阿私陀仙人授我仙法。師逢十力弟子修習禪那。自此報分殊途已過六劫。尊者曰。阻離累劫誠哉不虛。今可捨邪歸正以入佛乘。彌遮迦曰。昔阿私陀仙人授我記云。汝却後六劫。當遇同學獲無漏果。今也相遇非宿緣邪。願師慈悲令我解脫。尊者即度出家命師授戒餘仙眾始生我慢。尊者示大神通。於是俱發菩提心一時出家。(T 2076.207c27-208a8).
Thus the congregation of eighty thousand wizards became eighty thousand bhikṣus, and as they followed each other in going forth from household life, the Venerable [Dhītika] instructed them, saying, “The Buddha said that cultivating wizardry and training in the inferior ...and so on, down to...1 The Master [Miśraka] heard this, tallied and awakened.

INVESTIGATION【拈提】

Although the practice of wizardry enables one to gain a long life and to attain supernormal powers and marvelous functions, it only penetrates eighty thousand kalpas into the past and eighty thousand kalpas into the future. There is no discernment any earlier or later. Even if one cultivates neither ideation nor non-ideation and enters concentration with neither mind nor ideation, unfortunately, one is reborn in the heaven of non-ideation. Although one thereby becomes a long-lived deva who has been able to lose one’s form body, still one has an allotment of the continuous flow of karmically conditioned consciousness. One will be unable to seek instruction from a buddha, and one will be unable to traverse the way. When the recompense from that karmically conditioned consciousness is exhausted, one will fall into Avīci Hell. Therefore, it is like a rope that pulls and binds. Ultimately, one is without the capacity for liberation.

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 unable to seek instruction from a buddha (butsu ni sanzuru koto mo ezu 佛に參ずることも得ず). There are “eight difficulties” (C. banan 八難; J. hachinan) that can prevent one from being able to see a buddha or hear the dharma (C. jianfo wenfa 見佛聞法; J. kenbutsu monpō): (1) being in a hell; (2) being in the realm of hungry ghosts; (3) being an animal; (4) being in Uttarakuru, the great continent north of Mount Sumeru where all is pleasant; (5) being a long-lived deva; (6) being deaf, blind, or dumb; (7) being a worldly philosopher; and (8) being born during an age when there is no buddha in the world (DDB, s.v. 八難).
Although students of the Hīnayāna realize the first fruit, realize the second fruit, realize the third fruit, realize the fourth fruit, and realize pratyeka-buddhahood, they nonetheless are practicing within the confines of body and mind, and they are pursuing the way within the confines of delusion and awakening. On account of this, sages of the first fruit pass through eighty thousand kalpas before first becoming bodhisattvas with the mind of a beginner. Sages of the second fruit pass through sixty thousand kalpas before first becoming bodhisattvas with the mind of a beginner. Sages of the third fruit pass through forty thousand kalpas before first becoming bodhisattvas with the mind of a beginner. Sages who are pratyeka-buddhas pass through ten thousand kalpas and then enter the bodhisattva path. Even with good karmic causes on which they can rely, regrettably, because of that, the karma of the round of rebirth is still not exhausted. This, too, is like a rope pulling. Fundamentally, they are not people who are liberated.

Truly, even if one destroys views and perceptions with their eighty-eight afflictions, and destroys confusions that are as innumerable as motes of dust and sand, such that even the slightest mote of dust cannot remain and there is not an iota of confusion left, these are merely good deeds that are conditioned by karma; in the final analysis, they are not the uncontaminated buddha-fruit. That being the case, such methods of pursuing the way as returning to the root, going back to the source” and “take ‘waiting for awakening’ as the norm” are all in this same category.

1 first fruit (C. chuguo 初果; J. shoka). → four fruits.

2 Sages of the third fruit (sanka no shōja 三果の聖者). In the Kenkon’in manuscript and other early textual witnesses, this sentence is followed by another that reads, “Sages of the fourth fruit pass through twenty thousand kalpas before first becoming bodhisattvas with the mind of a beginner.” However, that line is missing from the 1857 woodblock edition compiled by Busshū Sen’ei 佛洲仙英 (1794–1864), as well as from the 1885 revision by Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒 (1845–1918) and the Shūmuchō edition of the Denkōroku, all of which are filiated to the 1857 text.
Therefore, gentlemen, do not regard even “no such thing” as essential, lest you become like the “followers of other paths who are lost in a mistaken view of emptiness.” Do not stop at “Majestic Voice, of the Kalpa of Emptiness.”¹ That, too, would be like a “corpse whose soul has not dispersed.” Do not try to halt the “sky flowers of delusive dharmas” or attempt to penetrate the ultimately real original nature. This, rather than being effective, puts one in the category of sages who eliminate ignorance and realize the middle way. Giving rise to clouds in cloudless places and producing flaws in flawless places, they are just like the destitute son roaming foreign lands or the impoverished guest who is ignorant and intoxicated.

Think about it. Who are you to speak about what comes before birth, to speak about what comes after death, or to inquire about some past, future, or present? For vast kalpas, there has not been any miscommunication for even a moment. From birth until death, it is only this “such.” Be that as it may, if you do not strike it one time, then, futilely, you will be deluded and confused by the realm of the senses and must remain someone who does not know your own self. You will be alienated from what is before your eyes. Thus, you will neither know the place from which body and mind arise, nor discern the place from which the myriad dharmas flow out. For no reason, you will try to sweep them away; and for no reason, you will

vow to seek it out. Because you are like this, you trouble buddhas to appear in the world, and you beseech ancestral teachers to confer their admonishments. Although they confer admonishments in such a way and extend their hands, still you are deluded and confused by your view of your own self, saying that you do not know, or saying that you do not understand. This is not to be entirely ignorant, nor is it to be deeply intimate with it, like a box and its lid. While futilely residing within these calculations and schemes, you come up with views that discriminate between true and false.

Don’t you know this? All of you people come in response to a call and reach a destination in response to a pointing finger. That is not something born of intentional planning, nor is it something that arises from perceiving and knowing. Truly, it is [the workings of] your lord master. That lord master has no face or bodily features. Nevertheless, it vacillates and never has a moment when it stops. Based on that, this mind comes rising up, and we call it “me.” Once this “me” appears, on top of that the four primary elements, five aggregates, eighty-four thousand pores, and three hundred and sixty bones and joints all come together, forming each of your single bodies. It is similar to the sparkling of jewels, and like the echoes that accompany sounds.

Thus, one comes in birth and goes in death, without a single moment when anything is lacking, and without a single moment when anything is in excess. In this manner of arising and ceasing, although one is born it is not the beginning of life, and although one dies there is no trace of death. It is just like the way that waves arise in the middle of the ocean without leaving any traces, and like the way that waves never cease. Although they go and go, they never reach any other place. There is only the vicissitude of the ocean: large waves and small waves arising, without end.
Your minds are also like this. They vacillate and never have a moment when they stop. Therefore, it makes its appearance as skin, flesh, bones, and marrow, and comes forth functioning as the four primary elements and five aggregates. It also makes its appearance as peach blossoms\(^1\) and green bamboo\(^2\), and it realizes awakening as “gaining the way” and “clarifying the mind.” It divides into the categories of sound and form, differs in the ways of seeing and hearing, experiences as “wearing clothes and eating food,” and functions as language and deeds. Although it divides and divides, it is not [identical with] the dharmas that are discriminated. Although it appears and reappears, it does not dwell in any substance or attributes. It is just like the various illusions produced by an illusionist, or the various images that emerge in dreams. Ten thousand reflections can undergo a thousand changes and ten thousand transformations in a mirror, but it is only the surface of a single mirror.

If you do not understand in this way, and futilely cultivate wizardry or train in the inferior, there will be no time of liberation. There is nothing shackling any of you. How then can you become newly released? Delusion and awakening, fundamentally, do not exist; from the very start, one is removed from both bondage and liberation. Is this not non-arising? Is this not the great ocean? In what place could there be any small streams? Lands as numerous as motes of dust and infinitesimal motes of dust are all

---

1. *peach blossoms* (C. *taohua*; J. *tōka*). An allusion to the story of Lingyun Zhiqin 靈雲志勤 (J. Reiun Shigon; d.u.), who was awakened when he saw peach blossoms. → Lingyun Zhiqin.

2. *green bamboo* (C. *cuizhu*; J. *suichiku*). An allusion to the story of Xiangyan Zhixian 香嚴智閑 (J. Kyōgen Chikan; -898), who was awakened when he heard the sound of a pebble striking a bamboo stalk. → Xiangyan Zhixian.
the ocean of the dharma realm. Valley streams, violent floods, and the great rivers return to the source, all gushing back upon the ocean. Accordingly, there are no small streams that should be abandoned, and no great ocean that should be grasped. Because it is “such,” [Miśraka’s] differentiating ceased of its own accord, and his longstanding views were at once rectified. His abandonment of wizardry and his going forth from household life was an expression of his karmic bond from a previous life.1

Accordingly, if you people inquire when coming and inquire when going in this way, then you will penetrate mind and language. Truly, this is a face-to-face encounter between intimate friend and intimate friend, when one’s own self, together with one’s own self, nods in assent. Together you swim in the ocean of the nature, without any separation for even a moment. Truly, if you become conscious in this way, then that must be the manifest result of your karma from previous lives.

Have you not read Great Master Ma’s saying? It goes:2

---

1 karmic bond from a previous life (C. suyuan qi 宿縁契; J. shukuen kei). This refers to the fact, mentioned earlier, that Miśraka had met Dhītika in a previous life and practiced dhyāna together with him.

2 It goes (iwakku 曰く). The following quotation is a transcription into Japanese (yomikudashi 読み下し) of part of a nearly identical Chinese passage that appears in the Extensive Record of Chan Master Mazu Daoyi: It is in opposition to delusion that we speak of awakening, but at root there is no delusion, and awakening too does not arise. All living beings, from infinite kalpas ago, have never left the dharma-nature samādhi. While always in dharma-nature samādhi, they wear clothes and eat food, and converse with one another. Their six sense faculties function, carrying out everything, and all of this is the dharma-nature. Not understanding “returning to the source,” they follow names and chase after signs. With deluded feelings and false constructions, they produce every kind of karma. If one can, in one instant of thought, turn back the radiance [i.e. reflect on one’s own mind], then the entire substance is the sacred mind.

《馬祖道一禪師廣錄》對迷説悟。本既無迷。悟亦不立。一切眾生。從無量劫來。不出法性三昧。長在法性三昧中。著衣喫飯。言談祗對。六根運用。一切施為。盡是法性。不解返源。隨名逐相。迷情妄起。造種種業。若能一念返
All living beings from innumerable kalpas down to now have never left the dharma-nature samādhi. While always in the dharma-nature samādhi, they wear clothes and eat food, and converse with one another. Their six sense faculties function, carrying out everything, and this is all the dharma-nature.

Hearing this kind of saying, you should not take it to mean that living beings exist within the dharma-nature. Saying “dharma-nature” and saying “living beings” is just like saying “water” and “waves.” Thus, although we rely on words to speak about water and to speak about waves, how could they possibly be different kinds of things?

This morning, when expounding this episode, I came up with a humble verse. Great assembly, do you wish to hear it?

**Verse on the Old Case**

縱有連天秋水潔。何如春夜月朦朧。人家多是要清白。掃去掃來心未空。

If we suppose that it has a connection with heaven, autumn water is pure, but what about the haziness of the moon on a night in spring? Most other people desire what is clear and white; they sweep and sweep, but their minds are not yet empty.