CHAPTER THIRTEEN  (Dai jūsan shō  第十三章)

ROOT CASE  【本則】

第十三祖、迦毘摩羅尊者、因馬鳴尊者、

The Thirteenth Ancestor, Venerable Kapimala, once heard Venerable Aśvaghoṣa¹

説 佛 性 海 曰 、山 河 大 地 、皆 依 建 立 。 三 明 六 通 、由 茲 發 現 。

explain the ocean of buddha-nature, saying, “Mountains and rivers and the great earth are all established in reliance on it, and the three awarenesses and six supernormal powers appear from it.”

師聞信悟。

On that occasion, the Master [Kapimala] heard, believed, and awakened.

Pivotal Circumstances  【機縁】

師は

The Master [Kapimala]²

華氏國の人なり。初め外道たりしとき、徒三千あり。諸の異論に通ぜり。

was a man of the Country of Pātaliputra. Initially he was on another path and had three thousand followers. He fully understood all the different theories.

¹ Venerable Aśvaghoṣa (Memyō Sonja 馬鳴尊者). The quotation of Aśvaghoṣa that follows is nearly identical to one that appears in the biography of the “Twelfth Ancestor, Aśvaghoṣa Bodhisattva” in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame: 《景德傳燈錄》説性海云。山河大地皆依建立。三昧六通由茲發現。

(T 2076.51.209c20-21).

Note that the Jingde Era Record says “ocean of the nature,” whereas the Denkōroku says “ocean of buddha-nature.” Aśvaghoṣa’s words are quoted and commented on by Dōgen in the chapter of his Treasury of the True Dharma Eye entitled “Buddha-Nature” (Busshō 佛性).

² 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 “Thirteenth Ancestor, Kapimala”:

《景德傳燈錄》華氏國人也。初為外道有徒三千通諸異論。

(T 2076.51.209c29-210a2).
was turning the wheel of the sublime dharma in Pātaliputra. Suddenly an old man appeared and flopped down on the ground in front of [Aśvaghoṣa’s] seat. The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] said to the congregation, “This is not an ordinary person; this must be

---

1 Venerable Aśvaghoṣa (Memyō Sonja 馬鳴尊者). 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 “Twelfth Ancestor, Aśvaghoṣa Bodhisattva”:

《景德傳燈錄》於華氏國轉妙法輪。忽有老人坐前仆地。師謂眾曰。此非庸流當有異相。言訖不見。俄從地踊出一金色人。復化為女子右手指師。而説偈曰。稽首長老尊、當受如來記、今於此地上、宣通第一義。説偈已瞥然不見。師曰。將有魔來與吾校力。有頃風雨暴至天地晦冥。師曰。魔之來信矣。吾當除之。即指空中現一大金龍。奮發威神震動山岳。師儼然於坐魔事隨滅。經七日有一小蟲。大如蟭螟潛形坐下。師以手取之示眾曰。斯乃魔之所變。盜聽吾法耳。乃放之令去。魔不能動。師告之曰。汝但歸依三寶即得神通。遂復本形作禮懺悔。師問曰。汝名誰耶。眷屬多少。曰我名迦毘摩羅有三千眷屬。師曰。汝盡神力變化若何。曰我化巨海為小事。師曰。汝化性海得否。曰何謂性海。我未嘗知。師即為説性海云。山河大地皆依建立。三昧六通由茲發現。
a strange sign.” As soon as he said this, the old man disappeared from sight. Also, a golden-hued person suddenly sprang forth from the earth. Then he transformed into a woman. Pointing at the Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] with her right hand, she said in verse:

I bow my head to the Venerable Elder,
to receive the Tathāgata’s prediction.
Now, upon this ground,
thoroughly convey the ultimate truth.

Upon finishing the verse, she disappeared from sight. The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] said, “There will be a demon coming to compare his power to mine.” Soon wind and rain arrived violently, darkening heaven and earth. The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] said, “This is evidence of the demon’s arrival. I will expel it.” Then he pointed to the sky, and a large golden dragon appeared, using awesome supernormal strength to shake the mountains. The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] sat solemnly, and the activities of the demon ceased accordingly. After seven days passed, there was a small insect, about the size of a moth larva, hiding beneath [Aśvaghoṣa’s] seat. The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] took it in his hand and told the assembly, “This is what that demon was transformed into. It can only eavesdrop on my dharma.” Thereupon he set it free, but the demon was unable to move. The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] informed it, “If you just take refuge in the three treasures, you will attain supernormal powers.” The demon then returned to his original form, paid obeisance, and repented. The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] asked, “What is your name, and how many adherents do you have?” [The demon] answered, “I am named Kapimala, and I have three thousand adherents.” [Aśvaghoṣa said], “Using all of your supernormal strength, what transformations can you accomplish?” [Kapimala] said, “For me to change the vast ocean is an extremely small matter.” The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] said, “Are you able to change the ocean of the nature?” [Kapimala] said, “What is the ‘ocean of the nature’? I have never known of it.” The Venerable [Aśvaghoṣa] then explained ocean of the nature to him, saying, “Mountains and rivers and the great earth are all established based on it. The three awarenesses and six supernormal powers appear from it.”

The Master [Kapimala] heard this, believed, and awakened.
From an old person flopping on the ground to becoming a moth larva insect, [Kapimala’s] manifestations of supernormal strength were truly innumerable. He said, “To change the vast ocean is a very small matter.” Now, although there was no limit to his manifestation of supernormal strength in transforming the vast ocean into mountains, or changing mountains into the vast ocean, he did not even know the name “ocean of the nature,” much less anything about changing it! That being so, because he was unaware what the mountains and rivers and the great earth were transformations of, Aśvaghoṣa explained: “They are transformations of the ocean of the nature. Not only this, but also the three awarenesses1 and six supernormal powers transformed out of it.”

The samādhis mentioned here are the innumerable samādhis of the Heroic March Sūtra, etc.,2 and the six supernormal powers such as the divine eye and divine ear. Having neither the boundary of a beginning nor the boundary of an end, it is a case of “three and three of the former, and three and three of the latter.” Truly, when mountains and rivers and the great earth are established, samādhis change into earth, water, fire, and wind,3 and also

1 three awarenesses (sanmyō 三明). Tajima (p. 316a) suggests that there is a mistake in the text here and that sanmyō 三明 (“three awarenesses”) should actually be zanmai 三昧 (“samādhi”), because the next sentence explains what the “samādhis mentioned here” are.

2 innumerable samādhis of the Heroic March Sūtra, etc. (Shuryōgon nado no muryō zanmai 首楞嚴等の無量三昧). The Shūmuchō edition of the Denkōroku (p. 86) takes Shuryōgon 首楞嚴 as referring to the Heroic March Sūtra. Tajima (p. 316b) cites that text at T 15.629bff; also see p. 631c.

3 earth, water, fire, and wind (C. di shui huo feng 地水火風; J. chi sui ka fū). These are the four primary elements that, when combined, constitute a living person; their breaking apart signifies death.

© 2017 by Sōtōshū Shūmuchō. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced in any form, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, or otherwise without the prior written permission of the Publisher.
change into mountains and rivers, grasses and trees. They also transform into so-called “skin, flesh, bones, and marrow,” and change into the five parts of the body as well. There is not one matter or a single dharma that comes from outside this purview.

Therefore, throughout the twelve periods of the day there is no concentrated effort at pointless abandonment, and within innumerable births and deaths there is no appearance of useless manifestations. Therefore, there is no limit to that which is seen with the eye, and there is no limit to that which is heard with the ear. Such seeing and hearing probably cannot be measured even by buddha-awareness. How much less so the creations of the ocean of the nature?

Therefore, mental objects are all dharmas without boundaries. Let us absolutely not fall into enumerating them. This is the ocean of the nature. Therefore, it is thus. However, to see the present body amounts to seeing mind. Knowing mind amounts to realizing body. Body and mind are entirely non-dual. How could nature and signs be divided?

Even if [the demon], while still on a different path, manifested supernormal transformations, and this was not outside his purview, he did not know himself that this was the ocean of the nature. Because of this, he came to doubt and be confused about himself, and to doubt others. Thus, because he lacked knowledge of these various existences, he was one who could not yet reach the fundamental root. He could not endure a test of power. Therefore, his demonic strength was exhausted in the end, and supernormal transformations became impossible. Finally, he abandoned his self, took refuge in another, ended the conflict, and manifested rectitude.
This being so, even if you understand mountains and rivers and the great earth, do not become uselessly bound up in sound and form. Even if you illuminate your own original nature, do not abide in additional perceiving and knowing. Additional perceiving and knowing are also one or two “buddha faces and ancestor faces.” They are what are called “fences, walls, tiles, and pebbles.” The original nature is not restricted by additional seeing, hearing, perceiving, and knowing, nor does it depend on movement or stillness.

While this is so, if you establish the ocean of the nature, then movement and stillness definitely go and come without interruption. Skin, flesh, bones, and marrow appear as time passes. If you want to debate the fundamental root in this manner, then I would say that although seeing and hearing appear, and although sound and form appear, those are not on account of anything else. Thus, striking emptiness makes an echo. Thus, all sounds appear. Transform emptiness, and various objects appear. Thus, shapes have variations. Thus, do not think that emptiness is without appearance, and do not think that emptiness is without sound.

Furthermore, when you arrive at this place and meticulously inquire until you arrive at understanding, you will not be able to regard it as empty, nor will you be able to regard it as existing. Thus, you will not be able to regard it as a dharma that is hidden or manifest. You will not be able to regard it as a dharma that is self or other. What is there to call “other”? What is there to call “me”? It is exactly like “in space,” where “there is not a single

1 not on account of anything else (ta no tame ni subeki nashi 他の為にすべきなし). In other words, seeing and hearing occur on account of the fundamental root, which is the ocean of the nature, not because of anything else.
thing,” and it resembles the emergence of all waters in the vast ocean. Past and present, it has never changed. Going or coming, how could there be a separate road?

Therefore, when appearing there is not a single speck added, and when hidden there is not an iota lost. A “mass of dharmas combine to make this body.” Extinguishing the myriad dharmas, you can then explain the one mind. Thus, clarifying the way and realizing mind should not be sought after in directions anywhere outside your purview. But if the scenery of the original ground of one’s own self comes to be manifest, others call it a person, demon, or beast.

Xuefeng said:1 “If you wish to understand this matter, it is as if inside me there were a single ancient mirror. If a barbarian comes, a barbarian appears in it; if a Chinese comes, a Chinese appears in it.” This is entirely the samādhi of recognizing illusion, which is why its beginning is inexhaustible and its end is also inexhaustible. Thus, even when mountains and rivers and the great earth are established, they all rely on this, and even when the three awarenesses and the six supernormal powers emerge, they rely on this. Therefore, do not hold the view that there is even an inch of the earth outside your own mind, and do not be attached to even a drop of river water outside the ocean of the nature.

This morning, I would like to attach some humble words to this episode. Do you wish to hear them?

1 Xuefeng said (Seppō iwaku 雪峰曰). The quotation that follows is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a famous kōan that appears in many Chinese Chan texts. → ancient mirror.
After a long pause, he [Keizan] spoke the following verse:

VERSE ON THE OLD CASE  【頌古】
浩渺波濤縱滔天。清 淨 海 水 何 曾 變。
Even if vast boundless waves tower to the heavens, how could the pure water of the ocean ever change?

1 After a long pause, he spoke (ryōkyū shite iwaku 良久して曰く). This is an odd interpolation of a voice, not Keizan’s own, that is speaking about him. The voice, presumably that of an acolyte who was recording Keizan’s sermon, was last heard at the very beginning of the Denkōroku, where it says that “the Master [Keizan] responded for the first time to a request for edification.”