CHAPTER TWENTY (Dai nijusshō 第二十章)

Root Case 【本則】

第二十祖、闍夜多尊者、因十九祖示曰、

The Twentieth Ancestor, Venerable Jayata, responded to instructions by the Nineteenth Ancestor [Kumāralabdha], who said:

汝雖已信三業、而未明業從惑生、惑因識有、識依不覺、不覺依心。

“Although you have faith in the three modes of karma, you have yet to clarify that karma arises in accordance with confusion; that the causes of confusion exist in consciousness; that the basis of consciousness is non-awakening; and that the basis of non-awakening is mind. Mind is originally pure, without arising or ceasing, without fabrication, without retribution, without victory or defeat, utterly tranquil, and vivid. If you enter this dharma gate, you can be the same as the buddhas. Everything good and evil, conditioned and unconditioned, will all be like a dream.” The Master [Jayata], upon hearing this, accepted these words, understood their significance, and thereby uncovered his innate wisdom.

Pivotal Circumstances 【機縁】

師は

The Master [Jayata],

北天竺國の人なり。智慧淵沖にして化導無量なり。

was a man of a country in North India. His wisdom was deeply infused, and those he converted and led were innumerable.

1 said (C. yue 曰; J. iwaku). The block of Chinese text that follows is nearly identical to one that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Nineteenth Ancestor, Kumāralabdha” (T 2076.51.213a3-8).

2 three modes of karma (C. sanye 三業; J. sangō). This expression, in the present context, is a reference to the three times of karmic fruition.

3 The Master (Shi wa 師は). The remainder of this sentence is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of an identical Chinese line that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Twentieth Ancestor, Jayata”:

《景德傳燈錄》北天竺國人也。智慧淵沖化導無量。(T 2076.51.213a17-18).
At this time, in Central India, he encountered the Nineteenth Ancestor [Kumāralabdha] and questioned him, saying:

“In my household, my father and mother from the start have had faith in the three treasures, but nonetheless are tormented by illnesses. Their enterprises never go as they hope. The neighboring households, in contrast, always perform the work of caṇḍāla. Their bodies always are strong, and their endeavors work out well. What good fortune do they have, and what transgressions do we have?” The Venerable [Kumāralabdha] said: “How could you be perplexed about this? Hypothetically, there are three times of karmic recompense for good and evil. In general, people often see the humane dying young, the violent living long, the treacherous enjoying good fortune, and the righteous suffering misfortune, which leads them to say, ‘There is no cause and effect; sin and good deeds are chimeric.’ In particular, they do not know that just as shadows and echoes follow along without an iota of confusion, even if a hundred, thousand, or million kalpas go by,

1 saying (iwaku 曰く). The block of text that follows these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a nearly identical Chinese passage that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Nineteenth Ancestor, Kumāralabdha”:

《景德傳燈錄》我家父母素信三寶而嘗縈疾瘵。凡所營作皆不如意。而我隣家久為旃陀羅行。而身常勇健所作和合。彼何幸而我何辜。尊者曰。何足疑乎。且善惡之報有三時焉。凡人恒見仁者壽而暴惡壽。便謂亡因果無罪福。殊不知影隨相隨毫釐不爽。縱經百千萬劫亦不磨滅。時闍夜多聞是語已。頓釋所疑。尊者曰。汝雖已信三業。而未明業從惑生。惑因識有。識依不覺。不覺依心。心本清淨無生滅無造作。無報應無勝負。寂寂然靈靈然。汝若入此法門可與諸佛同矣。一切善惡有為無為皆如夢幻。開夜多承言領旨。即發宿慧。(T 2076.51.212c25-213a8).
it [karmic recompense] is never obliterated, and karmic involvements definitely meet with corresponding results.” At that moment, when the Master [Jayata] had finished hearing these words, he suddenly resolved what he was perplexed about. The Venerable [Kumāralabdha] said, “Although you have faith in the three modes of karma” ... and so on, down to... and thereby uncovered his innate wisdom.

**Investigation  【拈提】**

As for the preceding episode, truly, students should gain sight of it attentively, point by point. As was said:

“From the start, they have had faith in the three treasures, but nonetheless are tormented by illnesses. Their enterprises never go as they hope. The neighboring households, in contrast, always perform the work of caṇḍāla. Their bodies always are strong, and their endeavors work out well.”

Arriving at this, he [Jayata] thought: “I have taken refuge in the buddha-dharma for many years. Based on the power of the buddha-dharma, my body should always be free from ailments, and my affairs should go in accord with my wishes. However, nothing goes as I hope, and my body, too, is tormented by illness. What have I done wrong? The caṇḍāla have from the first performed evil actions. They do not plant any wholesome seeds at all. Nevertheless, whatever affairs they come in contact with proceed auspiciously, and their bodies are strong. Why are they so fortunate?”

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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 As was said (iwayuru 謂ゆる). The block of text that follows is a repetition of what Jayata, as quoted above in the Pivotal Circumstances section, said about the misfortune experienced by his own father and mother.
Today’s people, too, think like this. If even those who go forth from household life have these thoughts, how much more must householders be like this? [However, as Kumāralabdha] said: ¹ “How could you be perplexed about this? Hypothetically, there are three times of karmic recompense for good and evil. In general, people see those who are humane meeting a premature death, while those who are impulsive and violent have lifespans that are long. They see those who commit heinous crimes enjoying good fortune, while those of deep righteousness suffer misfortune and evil. Not having clarified the past and not understanding the future, they are merely confused by objects before their eyes, and thus they think that ‘there is no cause and effect; sin and good deeds are chimeric.’” This is the extremity of foolishness and stupidity. Because their study of the way is doltish, they become like this.

¹ said (iwaku 日く). The two sentences that follow are a verbatim repetition of what Kumāralabdha is quoted as saying above, in the Pivotal Circumstances section. The remainder of the passage marked here as a quotation is a paraphrase of Kumāralabdha’s words in the Pivotal Circumstances section.
recompense is received during one’s third life,¹ fourth life, and so on up to innumerable future lives. Accordingly, even though good deeds done in the past are the basis for receiving good in one’s present life, there may also be deeds from earlier lives that alter the present fruits.

That is to say, purely good or purely evil karmic causes will engender purely agreeable or hateful karmic effects in the present life. Those with mixed good and evil karma will receive mixed good and evil karmic results. Moreover, the power of cultivating the buddha-dharma can shift heavy karmic retribution so that one receives light retribution, and can shift light recompense so that it is eliminated at present. It is said that the evil causes of past kalpas are sure to result in the experience of heavy suffering in the future, but by the power of cultivation in one’s present life one receives a lightening of it. Perhaps you are tormented by illness, or perhaps affairs do not go in accordance with your wishes, or perhaps when you speak you are treated as insignificant by others. These are all cases of future heavy suffering that is being received more lightly in your present life. Therefore, you should rely even more on the power of cultivating the buddha-dharma. Karmic recompense for things done in the far distant past are sure to be lightened, if only one is courageous and strives vigorously. However, as student trainees, even if you understand the way according to your capacity, perhaps you get a bad name, or perhaps your enterprises do not go in accordance with your hopes, and your body too is not healthy. If so, think of it as heavy retribution that has shifted so that you receive a lightening of it. Even if there are people who are hostile to you, never resent them. Even if there are people who slander you, never find fault with them. Even if there are people who excessively honor and revere that slanderer, do not

¹ third life (sanshō 三生). Counting one’s present life as “first,” one’s next life as “second,” the “third life” is the one after that.
loathe them. Your work of the way will increase day by day, and your debt of past karma will be extinguished hour by hour.

Furthermore, you must meticulously investigate and cultivate. Although you already believe in the three modes of karma, you do not yet know the fundamental root of karma. The “karma” spoken of here has recompense that is divided into good and bad, admits to the different categories of ordinary and sagely, and involves karmic recompense in any of the three realms, six destinies, four modes of birth, and nine existences. This karma arises from delusion. The “delusion” mentioned here is hating or loving that which should not be hated or loved, and regarding as “is or is not” that which should not be affirmed or negated. The “confusion” mentioned here is knowing as “male” that which is not male, knowing as “female” that which is not female, and distinguishing self as separate from others. The “non-awakening” mentioned here is not knowing the root source of one’s own self, not knowing the place where myriad dharmas arise, and neglecting wisdom in all loci. This is named “ignorance.”

This has no deliberation, and has no dust of karmic entanglement. This mind is originally pure and is not burdened by any remaining karmic entanglement. A single shift of this mind is called “non-awakening.” If one

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1. *you must meticulously investigate and cultivate* (subekaraku shisai ni santoku shugyō subeshi 須く子細に参得修行すべし). The implied object of these two verbs is the language and import of the Root Case.

2. *This (kore wa 是れは). What “this” refers to may strike the reader as unclear. However, careful attention to the succession of topics that Keizan raises in the present Investigation section allows us to positively determine that the antecedent is the “mind” referred to in the line of the Root Case that reads “the basis of non-awakening is mind” (C. bujue yi xin 不覚依心; J. fukaku wa shin ni yoru 不覺は心に依る). That is because Keizan systematically comments on the language of the Root Case, phrase by phrase, and the word “this” raises the fifth topic in that sequence, which is the meaning of the aforementioned line.
perceives and knows this non-awakening, then one’s own mind is originally pure. One’s own-nature is numinously clear.

If you are able to obtain clarification in this way, then ignorance is immediately destroyed, and the twelve links of the round of rebirth are finally rendered empty. The four modes of birth and the six destinies are quickly done away with. The original mind of each and every person is like this. Thus, there is no separation between arising and ceasing, and no things that are fabrications. Therefore, there is no hating, no loving, no increase, and no decrease. There is only tranquility and vividness.

Gentlemen, if you wish to gain sight of the original mind, cast off your myriad affairs, put all karmic involvements to rest, do not think of good or evil, focus your eyes on the tip of your nose for a while, and observe your original mind. At the moment when your entire mind is tranquil, with all its characteristics exhausted and its fundamental root of ignorance destroyed, the branches and leaves of karmic recompense will instantly cease to exist. Therefore, it is not restricted to a place of non-discrimination, and it is not contingent on a time of non-thinking. It is not permanent, and it is not impermanent. It is not ignorance, and it is not clarity. It is not separate from the buddhas or distinguished from living beings. Only when you arrive at a standpoint that is pure and fully clear will you be, for the first time, a genuine patch-robed monk. If you become like this, then you will be the same as the buddhas.
Arriving here, all things conditioned and unconditioned are entirely like dreams and illusions. Even if you try to grasp them, your hands will come up empty. Even if you try to see it, your eyes cannot take it in. If you arrive at this standpoint, you will clarify the intent of the buddhas when they have yet to appear in the world, and break through to the place where living beings have yet to develop inverted views. But if your study does not reach this standpoint, then even if you worship the Buddha throughout the twelve periods of the day and regulate your body and mind in the midst of the four deportments, you will only get the superior rewards of rebirth as a human or god, a karmic recompense that is contaminated. This is like a shadow that follows a form: although it exists, it is not real. Therefore, each one of you, show some vitality and clarify your original mind!

例に依て卑語を着く。聴かんと要や。

As is customary, I will attach some humble words. Do you wish to hear them?

**VERSE ON THE OLD CASE**

豫章従來生空裏。枝葉根莖雲外榮。

The camphor tree, from the start, grows in space; its branches, leaves, roots, and trunk flourish beyond the clouds.

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1. show some vitality (seisai wo tsukete) 精彩を着けて. Literally, “don” or “wear” (着ける) the “color” or “appearance” (さい) of “energy” or “vitality” (せい). The colloquial Chinese expression jingcai (also written 精彩) means to “appear energetic.”

2. camphor tree (C. yuzhang; J. yoshō). This may be an allusion to Dongshan Liangjie 洞山良价 (J. Tōzan Ryōkai; 807–869) and the Sōtō Lineage that he is said to have founded. The allusion plays on the ambiguity of the word yuzhang 豫章 (J. yoshō), which means “camphor tree” (C. yuzhang zhi mu 豫章之木; J. yoshō no ki), and is also the name of the place — Yuzhang 豫章 (J. Yoshō) — where Dong Mountain (site of Dongshan’s monastery) was located. According to Case #49 of the Congrong Hermitage Record:

    Later, [Dongshan] moved to Mount Dong in Gaoan [County] in Yuzhang, where he became the first generation [abbot].

3. grows in space (C. sheng kongli 生空裏; J. kūri ni shōzu 空裏に生ず). The idea here seems to be that the “camphor tree” — the Sōtō Lineage founded by Dongshan (see previous note) — is rooted, as it were, in the understanding of the emptiness (C. kong 空; J. kū) of all phenomena.

4. its branches, leaves, roots, and trunk flourish beyond the clouds (C. zhiye genjing yunwai rong 枝葉根莖雲外榮; J. shiyō kenkei, unger ni sakau 枝葉根莖、雲外に榮う). In Chan/Zen texts, “beyond the clouds” (C. yunwai 雲外; J. unger) often means “beyond the world” (C. chu shijian 出世間). → camphor tree.