

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE (*Dai nijūgo shō* 第二十五章)

ROOT CASE¹ 【本則】

第二十五祖、婆舍斯多尊者、二十四祖示曰、

The Twenty-fifth Ancestor was Venerable Vasiṣṭa. The Twenty-fourth Ancestor [Siṃha] instructed him, saying:²

如來正法眼藏、今轉附汝。汝應保護普潤來際。

“I now bequeath to you the Tathāgata’s treasury of the true dharma eye. You should preserve it for universal benefit in the future.”

師

The Master [Vasiṣṭa]³

顯發宿因、密傳心印。

discovered the causes from previous lives, and there was a secret transmission⁴ of the mind-seal.

PIVOTAL CIRCUMSTANCES 【機縁】

師は

The Master [Vasiṣṭa]⁵

¹ **Root Case** (C. *benze* 本則; J. *konsoku*). The block of Chinese text that appears here is pieced together from separate passages that appear in two different biographies in the *Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame*. For details, see the two following notes.

² **saying** (C. *yue* 曰; J. *iuoku*). 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 “Twenty-fourth Ancestor, Siṃha Bhikṣu” (T 2076.51.215a2-3).

³ **The Master** (C. *shi* 師; J. *shi*). 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 “Twenty-fifth Ancestor, Vasiṣṭa” (T 2076.51.215a27-28).

⁴ **secret transmission** (C. *nichuan* 密傳; J. *mitsuden*). According to Tiantai (J. Tendai) school tradition, based largely on the *Record of the Transmission of the Dharma Collection* (translated in 472), the special transmission of the dharma from Śākyamuni down through a line of ancestral teachers ended with the death of the Twenty-fourth Ancestor, Siṃha. Because that text makes no mention of Siṃha transmitting the dharma to a successor, proponents of the Chan/Zen Lineage felt compelled to explain his transmission of the dharma to Vasiṣṭa as something carried out in secret.

⁵ **The Master** (*shi wa* 師は). The block of text that follows 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 “Twenty-fifth Ancestor, Vasiṣṭa”:

屬賓國の人なり。姓は婆羅門。父は寂行、母は常安樂。初め母、神劔を得ると夢む。因て孕むことあり。

was a man of the Country of Kashmir. His clan was *brahmaṇa*. His father was Tranquil Conduct and his mother was Ever Relaxed. In the beginning, his mother dreamed that she obtained a divine sword, and as a result became pregnant.

師子尊者、

The Venerable Sīmha,¹

遊方して屬賓國に到る。波利迦と云ふ者あり、本より禪觀に習ひ。故に禪定と知見と執相と捨相と不語の五衆あり。

wandering about, arrived in the Country of Kashmir. There was a man named Parika, who from the beginning had practiced *dhyāna* contemplation. As it happened, there were five congregations:² *dhyāna* concentration, knowledge and views, clinging to marks,³ abandoning marks,⁴ and not speaking.

《景德傳燈錄》屬賓國人也。姓婆羅門。父寂行、母常安樂。初母夢得神劔。因而有孕。(T 2076.51.215a25-27).

¹ Venerable Sīmha (Shishi Sonja 師子尊者). 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 “Twenty-fourth Ancestor, Sīmha Bhikṣu.”

《景德傳燈錄》遊方して屬賓國。有波利迦者。本習禪觀。故有禪定知見執相捨相不語之五衆。(T 2076.51.214c8-9).

² five congregations (C. *wuzhong* 五衆; J. *goshu*). This evidently refers to five groups of ascetics who practiced different modes of religious discipline, but it is not clear from the context whether they were Buddhist monks or not. Except for *dhyāna* concentration, moreover, the practices they are said to have engaged in are unknown in Buddhist literature.

³ clinging to marks (C. *zhixiang* 執相; J. *shusō*). The practice or school to which this refers is unknown. It is possible, though not especially likely, that the reference is to monks who are concerned with the “marks of dharmas” (C. *faxiang* 法相; J. *hossō*; S. *dharma-lakṣaṇa*), either in the metaphysical sense of the Abhidharma analysis of the basic elements of existence, or in the ethical sense of striving to conduct oneself in keeping with the restraints imposed by the Vinaya.

⁴ abandoning marks (C. *shexiang* 捨相; J. *shasō*). The practice or school to which this refers is unknown, although the referent is clearly the opposite of the “clinging to marks” (C. *zhixiang* 執相; J. *shusō*) that is mentioned just before it. If the latter refers to Abhidharma analysis of the basic elements of existence, then perhaps “abandoning marks” means regarding the “marks of dharmas” (C. *faxiang* 法相; J. *hossō*; S. *dharma-lakṣaṇa*) as empty concepts. Or perhaps “abandoning marks” refers to some kind of antinomian rejection of moral rules and ritual procedures.

尊者、既に五衆を攝して、名、遐邇に聞ふ。法嗣を求るに方りて一長者に遇ふ。其子を引て尊者に問て曰く、此子を斯多と名く。生るに當て便ち左手を拳る。今既に長ぜり。而も終に未だ舒ること能はず。願くは尊者、其宿因を示せ。尊者、之を覩て即ち手を以て接して曰く、我に珠を還すべし。童子遽かに手を開て珠を奉る。衆、皆驚異す。尊者曰く、吾れ前報に僧と爲れり。童子あり、婆舎と名く。吾れ嘗て西海の齋に赴て觀珠を受て之に附す。今吾に珠を還す理、固に然り。長者遂に其子を捨て出家せしむ。尊者即ち與に受具せしむ。前縁を以ての故に婆舎斯多と名く。

When the Venerable [Siṃha]¹ had gathered together the five congregations, his name was heard far and near. While searching for a *dharma heir*, he encountered an *elder*. The latter brought his son to the Venerable [Siṃha] and inquired of him, saying: “My son is named Sita. He was born with his left hand curled into a fist. Now he has grown, but he still cannot extend his fingers. Please, Venerable, reveal what causes from a previous lives account for this.” Venerable [Siṃha] gazed at [Sita], then reached out his hand and said, “You must return the jewel to me.” The youth immediately opened his hand and offered up a jewel. Everyone in the assembly was astonished. The Venerable [Siṃha] explained: “In a previous life, I was a monk. There was a youth whose name was Vasi. When I traveled to a *maigre feast* across the western seas, I received the jewel as a donation and bestowed it on him. This is definitely the reason why the jewel was returned to me now.” The *elder* accordingly gave up his son, having him *go forth from household life*. The Venerable [Siṃha] then had him *receive the full precepts*. Because of his previous *karmic conditions*, he named him Vasiṣṭa.²

¹ The Venerable (Sonja 尊者). The block of text that begins with 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 “Twenty-fourth Ancestor, Siṃha Bhikṣu”:

《景德傳燈錄》尊者既攝五衆名聞遐邇。方求法嗣。遇一長者。引其子問尊者曰。此子名斯多。當生便拳左手。今既長矣。而終未能舒。願尊者。示其宿因。尊者覩之。即以手接曰。可還我珠。童子遽開手奉珠。衆皆驚異。尊者曰。吾前報爲僧。有童子名婆舎。吾嘗赴西海齋受觀珠付之。今還吾珠理固然矣。長者遂捨其子出家。尊者即與受具。以前縁故名婆舎斯多。(T 2076.51.214c22-215a1).

This passage is given as a separate quotation in English translation because it is not contiguous in the *Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame* with the quotation that immediately precedes it.

² he named him Vasiṣṭa (*Bashashita to nazuku* 婆舎斯多と名く). That is to say, Siṃha combined two names: (1) that of the name of the boy with the jewel in his clenched fist, Sita; and (2) that of the youth he had given a jewel to in a past life, Vasi.

終に嗣續して曰く、

Finally, he was made heir and perpetuator by [Siṃha], who said,¹

如來の正法眼藏、今汝に授く。善く保護して來際に及ぼすべしと。

“I now bequeath to you the Tathāgata’s treasury of the true dharma eye. You should preserve it well, so that it reaches the future.”

INVESTIGATION 【拈提】

宿因を顯發すと云は、謂ゆる前生既に婆舍童子と云ふ。尊者の珠を預ける。今胎内に入り、及び長者の家に生るまで、尚ほ之を保持し、卒に尊者に奉る。

The expression [in the Root Case] “discovered the causes from previous lives” refers to the fact that in a previous life he [Vasiṣṭa] had already been the youth Vasi. The Venerable [Siṃha] had given him the jewel. From his entrance into the womb this time² until he was born in the household of the elder, he still held on to it, and eventually offered it up to the Venerable [Siṃha].

之に依て知るべし、此因縁必ずしも肉身壞れ、唯眞身のみありと謂ふべきに非ず。若し此身は是れ壞身となるならば、珠、如何が今保持せん。然も知るべし、捨生受生、本より是れ壞身に非ず。此に到りて、百骸俱に潰散して、一物鎮へに長靈なりと謂ふべからず。是如何なる者か長靈なるべきぞ。唯捨身を現じ受身を現するのみなり。故に謂つべし、前後兩箇に非ず、古今別異なしと。然れば是れ身と謂ふべきに非ず。是れ心と謂ふべきにも非ざるなり。身心と分れざれば、古今と分つべきに非ず。故に恁麼なり。

From this we know that this episode is not necessarily saying that the physical body is destroyed and that only a true body exists. If this body is a destructible body, then how could he [Vasiṣṭa] have preserved the jewel until now? Moreover, you should know that what relinquishes life and receives life is, from the start, not the destructible body. Arriving here, we should not say that “when one’s hundred bones are all broken up and scattered, the single thing preserved is the eternal spirit.” What kind of thing could possibly be “eternal spirit”? This is simply the appearance of relinquishing a body and the appearance of receiving a body, nothing more. Therefore,

¹ said (*iwaku* 曰く). The quotation that follows is a loosely rendered Japanese transcription (*yomikudashi* 読み下し) of the Chinese words attributed to Siṃha Bhikṣu in the Root Case of this chapter.

² entrance into the womb this time (*ima tainai ni iri* 今胎内に入り). “This time” (*ima* 今) refers to Sita’s entrance into the womb of his mother, Ever Relaxed.

what we should say is that before and after are not two separate things, and that past and present have no differentiation. This being so, there is no reason to call it “body,” and there is no reason to call it “mind,” either. When *body and mind* are not distinguished, there is no need to distinguish past and present. Therefore, it is “such.”

婆舎のみ是くの如くなるに非ず。眞實を言はば、人人皆悉く是くの如くなり。故に生所なく死所なし。時に随ひて頭を換へ面を反すのみなり。必ず四大を換へ五蘊を新たにするには非ず。都て一片肉團の覆ひ來るなく、曾て絲毫の骨頭の支へ來るなし。設ひ千種の形あり萬般の品あるも、悉く是本來の心光なり。

It is not only Vasi who is like this. In reality, every single person, each and every one, is like this. Hence, there is nothing that is born and nothing that dies. It is only that, as time goes by, “heads are exchanged, and faces turned over.” It is not necessarily the case that the four primary elements are exchanged, or that the five aggregates are renewed. Never has a single lump of meat¹ come as a covering, nor yet the tiniest bit of bone come as a support. Granted, there are a thousand types of phyla and myriad classes of species, but they all are the radiance of the original mind.

此道理を知らずして、此を幼少と思ひ、後を老大と思ふ。總て老體なく、本來幼少なし。若し是の如くならば、何に依てか生死を判じ、前後を分たん。之に依て前世の婆舎、今日の斯多、兩箇の身に非ずと指説する、是れ則ち宿因なり。故に如來の正法眼藏を傳付し、未來際を霑ほす。

Not knowing this principle, you think that this one is young and that one is old. But on the whole there are no aged bodies, and fundamentally there is no such thing as youth. When things are like this, on what basis could we possibly distinguish birth from death, or divide before and after? It was on this account that [Simha] indicated that the Vasi of a previous life and the Sita of today are not two separate persons. This is what is meant by “causes from previous lives.” Therefore, [Simha] “transmitted the Tathāgata’s treasury of the true dharma eye,”² so that it would benefit the future.

¹ lump of meat (C. *routuan* 肉團; J. *nikudan*). The flesh of the body. → lump of red meat.

² “transmitted the Tathāgata’s treasury of the true dharma eye” (Nyorai no shōbōgenzō wo denpu shi 如來の正法眼藏を傳付し). This is a quotation, in Japanese transcription (*yomikudashi* 読み下し), of a line from this chapter’s Root Case.

然れば知るべし、一切諸佛諸祖、本より曾て悟らず、一切の愚痴諸人、卒に迷はず。有時は修行し、有時は發心す。菩提發心、本と終なく始なし。衆生諸佛、本より劣に非ず勝に非ず。只恁麼縱横なるのみなり。然れば曠劫以來、曾て是の如く保任して、宿因を忘れざるのみなり。

What we should learn from this is that all buddhas and ancestors, from the beginning, have never been awakened, and that all ignorant people, in the end, are not deluded. Sometimes they engage in cultivation, and sometimes they arouse the thought of bodhi. Bodhi and arousing the thought, fundamentally, have no end and have no beginning.¹ Living beings and buddhas, fundamentally, are neither inferior nor superior. It is only “such,” in every direction. That being the case, it is simply that [Simha], after vast kalpas had gone by, then took responsibility in this manner and did not forget the “causes from previous lives.”

今朝、又這箇の因縁を指注するに、例に依て卑語あり。

This morning again, to comment on this episode, as is customary I have some humble words.

VERSE ON THE OLD CASE 【頌古】

開華落葉直彰時。藥樹王終無別味。

Blossoming flowers and falling leaves directly manifest the passage of time. The plant that is king of medicines, after all, has no distinctive flavor.

¹ Bodhi and arousing the thought, fundamentally, have no end and have no beginning (bodai hosshin, moto owari naku hajime nashi 菩提發心、本と終なく始なし). Conventionally speaking, arousing the thought of bodhi is the starting point or “beginning” of the bodhisattva path, while bodhi is the culminating point or “end.”