CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE (Dai nijūsan shō 第二十三章)

Root Case 【本則】

第二十三祖、鶴勒那尊者。因摩拏羅尊者示曰、
The Twenty-third Ancestor was Venerable Halenayaśas. On one occasion the Venerable Manorahita instructed him, saying,¹

“我有無上大法寶、汝當聽受化未來際。
“I have the unsurpassed great dharma treasure. You must hear and accept it, and convert others in the future.”

師聞契悟。
Upon hearing this, the Master [Halenayaśas] tallied and awakened.

Pivotal Circumstances 【機縁】

師は
The Master [Halenayaśas] ²

月支國の人なり。姓は婆羅門。父千勝、母は金光。子なきを以ての故に、七佛金幢に祈る。単も須彌山頂に一の神童あり、金環を持して、我れ來りと云と夢む。覚て孕むことあり。年七歳にして聚落に遊行し、民間の淫祀するを見て乃ち廟に入り、之を叱して曰く、汝妄に禍福を興して人を幻惑す。歳歳牲牢を費し、傷害すること甚しと。言ひ訖て廟貌忽然として壞せり。之に由て郷黨、之を聖子と謂ふ。年二十二にして出家す。三十にして摩拏羅尊者に遇ふ。

¹ saying (C. yue 曰; J. iwaku). The quotation in Chinese that follows is nearly identical to one that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Twenty-second Ancestor, Manorahita” (T 2076.51.214a22).

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 passage in Chinese that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Twenty-third Ancestor, Halenayaśas”:

《景德傳燈錄》月氏國人也。姓婆羅門。父千勝。母金光。以無子故祈于七佛。金幢即夢須彌山頂一神童持金環云我來也。覺而有孕。年七歳行聚落。観民間淫祀乃入廟叱之曰。汝妄興禍福幻惑於人。歲歲牲牢傷害斯甚。言訖。廟貌忽然として壞せり。之に由て郷黨、之を聖子と謂ふ。年二十二にして出家す。三十にして摩拏羅尊者に遇ふ。（T 2076.51.214a29-b26).
was a man of the Country of Tokharestan. His clan was brāhmaṇa. His father was Thousand Victories, and his mother was Golden Light. Because she lacked a child, she prayed at the golden banner of the seven buddhas. Then she dreamt of a divine youth on the peak of Mount Sumeru who held a golden ring and said, “I have come.” When she awoke, she was pregnant.¹ When the boy was in his seventh year, he wandered into a village and saw the people engaged in indecent worship. Thereupon he entered the shrine and scolded them, saying, “You recklessly give rise to misfortune and fortune, which confuses people. Year after year you squander sacrificial animals, causing terrible harm.” When he finished speaking, the facade of the shrine suddenly collapsed. As a result, the villagers called him “sagely child.” In his twenty-second year, he went forth from household life. In his thirtieth year, he encountered Venerable Manorahita.

The Master was called “Halenayaśas.”² "Lena"³ is Sanskrit, while “Ha”⁴ is a Chinese word, so he was called Halenayaśas by combining Sanskrit and Chinese.

The Master [Halenayaśas] was so named because a flock of cranes followed him. When he first encountered Manorahita, various miracles occurred. Although they should be raised one by one, I will raise just one episode.

¹ she was pregnant (baramu koto ari 孕むことあり). The motif of the “pure” conception of a sagely child that takes place in a dream (as opposed to sexual intercourse) was well established in medieval Chinese Buddhism from the life story of the Buddha. → Śākyamuni.

² called “Halenayaśas” (Kakurokuna to iu 鶴勒那と曰ふ). The block of text that follows these words is a Japanese transcription (yomikudashi 読み下し) of a similar passage in Chinese that appears in the Jingde Era Record of the Transmission of the Flame under the heading “Twenty-third Ancestor, Halenayaśas”:

《景德傳燈錄》鶴勒那者 (勒那梵語。鶴即華言). (T 2076.51.214a29).

³ “Lena” (C. Lena 勒那; J. Rokuna). This is a Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit ratna, meaning “jewel.”

⁴ “Ha” (C. He 鶴; J. Kaku). This Chinese glyph means “crane.”
師、尊者に問て曰く、

The Master [Halenayaśas] inquired of the Venerable [Manorahita], saying:

What karmic conditions do I have that I attract a flock of cranes?

The Venerable [Manorahita] replied: “During the fourth kalpa, you became a bhikṣu. Once when you were going to an assembly in a dragon palace, your disciples all wanted to accompany you. You observed the five hundred [disciples] in your congregation, and not a single person was worthy of the marvelous offerings. At that time, the disciples said: The master always preaches the dharma that says “one who has equanimity with regard to food also has equanimity with regard to dharmas.” Now, you are no longer like that, so what sageliness can there be in this?” You then allowed them to go to the assembly. When you relinquished that life and assumed a new life, converting those in various lands, those five hundred disciples, because of their slight merit and meager virtue,

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

《景德傳燈錄》我有何緣而感鶴衆。尊者曰。汝第四劫中嘗為比丘。當赴會龍宮。汝諸弟子咸欲隨從。汝觀五百衆中。無有一人堪任妙供。時諸子曰。師常說法。於食等者於法亦等。今既不然何聖之有汝即令赴會。自汝捨生趣生。轉化諸國。其五百弟子以福微德薄生於羽族。今感汝之惠故為鶴衆相隨。師則聞語曰。以何方便令彼解除。尊者曰。我有無上法寶。汝當聽受化未來際。

(T 2076.51.214a14-22).

2 marvelous offerings (C. miaogong 妙供; J. myōgu). The reference is probably to a feast, prepared as an offering to Buddhist monks, that was served at the assembly in the dragon palace. The glyph 赴 (J. fu, omomuku 赴く), translated here as “going to” the assembly, is often used in Chan/Zen rules of purity in the context of “attending meals” (C. fu zhoufan 赴粥飯; J. fu shukuban).
were reborn in the bird family. Now they sense your kindness, so they follow you as a flock of cranes.” Upon hearing these words, the Master [Halenayaśas] asked, “What skillful means can I use to liberate them?” The Venerable [Manorahita] replied, “I have the unsurpassed great dharma treasure, etc., etc.”

Investigation 【拈提】

Truly, according to the principle of equanimity with regard to food and equanimity with regard to dharmas, there is no separation between sages and commoners. Nevertheless, although master and disciples alike — as suggested by this principle — went in response to the invitation from the dragon palace, those whose persons were of slight merit and meager virtue were not fit to accept the marvelous offering, and thus joined the bird family. This episode should encourage the attentiveness of students. Now, in preaching the dharma, too, there is no discrimination, and in foods, as well, there should be sameness. Nevertheless, there are some who digest the alms of the faithful, and there are others who are harmed by the alms of the faithful. When it comes to this, it would seem that they are not lined up equally. We would have to call that the height of discrimination.

If you ask what the reason is, it is because if we look at food and look at dharmas, even if we see them as lined up equally, and even if we understand them as being one and the same, there is already the distinction of looking at dharmas and the distinction of looking at food. Dualistic views are not avoided. Confused by desirous expectations, they followed their master [to the feast at the dragon palace], and on that account ended up becoming birds. We know from this that they had not penetrated the principle of

1 etc., etc. (unmum 云云). This expression indicates an intended repetition of the remainder of the dialogue that appears in the Root Case of this chapter.
equanimity with regard to food and equanimity with regard to dharmas. Truly, they were bound by names and the existing signs.

When it comes to things like the “unsurpassed great dharma” mentioned here [in the Root Case], what could be called “food,” and what could be called “dharmas”? What is it that is sagely? What is it that is common? Actually, it is not anything that shapes and their shadows can possibly reach, and yet it is hard to name as “mind” or “nature.” This dharma, moreover, is not received from buddhas, not received from ancestors, not bestowed on children, and not transmitted by fathers. It has nothing that could be called “self” or “other.” From where do we get the terms “food” and “dharmas”? How much less could there possibly be a place to which one could go or be invited to, or such a thing as becoming a flock of cranes?

Therefore, be meticulous in fixing your eyes, be thorough in making a concentrated effort, and first of all know the numinous vacancy and marvelous clarity of your own mind’s original nature. Preserve it well and deeply ripen it, know even more that there is a transmission of the flame by the buddhas and ancestors, and then for the first time you will surely attain it.

Even supposing that you have clarified the gist of your own original nature, and that the quality of your liberation is equal to that of the buddhas and ancestors, there is still the “unsurpassed great dharma treasure”¹ that “you

¹ “unsurpassed great dharma treasure” (mujō no dai hōbō 無上の大法寶). This is a quotation, in Japanese transcription, of the Root Case of this chapter.
must hear and accept,”¹ and you must be able to “convert others in the future.”² This is not the principle of original nature. How, then, could it be within the sphere of cognition of seeing and hearing? It far transcends feelings of past and present, and from the start has never resided within the boundaries that separate ordinary beings and buddhas. Therefore, in calling out this person, it is impossible to take him as “buddha,” and impossible to take him as “ordinary.” He “neither sits properly within the hall, nor crosses over to either of the extreme functions.” Therefore, even if you seek his shadow, you cannot find it, and even if you search for his traces, you cannot find them. If one has reached this extremity, then what kind of thing is the so-called “mind-nature”? And what kind of thing is so-called “bodhi”? With a single vomit, vomit it all out. With a single shit, shit it all out.

At the time when things are like this, you will be an immeasurably great person. But if you do not arrive at such a place, then you will still be an ordinary person, and in the end will be a living being in samsāra. For this reason, gentlemen, you must gain sight of things in detail, and try to shoulder the “unsurpassed great dharma treasure.” Then the physical body of Old Śākya will certainly be warm. Only, do not be bound by names or labor over forms. You must study and be certain to discern reality.

I have some humble words that I would like to use to comment on the principle of this.

VERSE ON THE OLD CASE 【頌古】

粉壁挿雲巨嶽雪。純清絶點異青天。

Plastered walls pierce the clouds: enormous cliffs of snow. In their unblemished purity, they differ from the blue sky.

¹ “you must hear and accept” (chōju subeki 听受すべき). This is a quotation, in Japanese transcription, of the Root Case of this chapter.
² “convert others in the future” (mirai sai wo ke su 未来際を化す). This is a quotation, in Japanese transcription, of the Root Case of this chapter.