CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX (Dai nijūroku shō 第二十六章)

Root Case【本則】

第二十六祖、不如密多尊者、太子時、二十五祖問曰、

The Twenty-sixth Ancestor, Venerable Puṇyamitra, when he was a prince, was questioned by the Twenty-fifth Ancestor [Vasiṣṭa], who said:¹

汝欲出家、當為何事。師曰、我若出家、不為別事。祖曰、不為何事。
師曰、不為俗事。祖曰、當為何事。師曰、當為佛事。祖曰、太子智慧
天至、必諸聖降迹。祖卽許出家。


¹ said (C. yue; 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-fifth Ancestor, Vasiṣṭa” (T 2076.51.215b28-c3).

² For the sake of what matter (C. tang wei heshi 当為何事; J. masa ni nanigoto no tame ni 当に何事の為に). In Chan/Zen texts it is generally said that all practice should be for the sake of the “single great matter,” a.k.a. “one fundamental matter,” which is the matter of awakening. The Japanese translation of this four-glyph Chinese phrase that is given in the Shūmuchō edition of the Denkōroku reads: masa ni nanigoto wo ka nasu 当に何事をか為す, which translates as “what will you do?” That Japanese reading is incorrect, as is evidenced by the Denkōroku’s own Japanese translation later in this chapter, where the original Chinese expression buwei qishi 不為其事 is rendered as “It will not be for the sake of that matter” (sono koto no tame ni arazaru 其事の為に非ざる).

³ buddha-matters (C. foshi 佛事; J. butsuji). Throughout the present translation of the Denkōroku, the expression foshi 佛事 (J. butsuji) is rendered as “buddha-activity.” However, in the present context it is translated as “buddha-matters,” to highlight the repetitive usage of the glyph shi 事 (J. ji) in the original Chinese.
Pivotal Circumstances 【機縁】

師は南印度得勝王の太子なり。
The Master (Shi wa 師は), a prince, son of King Victorious of South India.

二十五祖、始め中印度の無我尊外道を伏して、即ち南印度に到る。
The Twenty-fifth Ancestor (Vasiṣṭa) first defeated the follower of an other path, Venerable No-Self of Central India, and then arrived in South India.

時に彼の國王を天徳と名く。迎へ請して供養す。王に二子あり、一是凶暴にして色力充盛なり。一是柔和にして長く疾苦に嬰る。祖、乃ち為に因果を陳ぶ。王、頓に所疑を釋く。
At that time, the king of the country was named Heavenly Virtue. He welcomed (Vasiṣṭa), invited him (to stay), and made offerings to him. The king had two sons. One was evil and violent, but looked like he was thriving. The other was gentle and affable, but had long suffered from illness. The Ancestor (Vasiṣṭa) explained the cause and effect [of that], and the king was suddenly freed of his doubts.

After the king, Heavenly Virtue, died.

1 The Master (Shi wa 師は). The sentence 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-sixth Ancestor, Puṇyaṁitra”:

《景德傳燈録》南印度得勝王之太子也。(T 2076.51.215c15-16).

2 At that time (toki ni 時に). 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-fifth Ancestor, Vasiṣṭa”:

《景德傳燈録》時彼國王名天徳。迎請供養。王有二子。一是凶暴而色力充盛。一是柔和而長嬰疾苦。祖乃為陳因果。王即頓釋所疑。(T 2076.51.215b12-14).

3 two sons (nishi 二子). One of the two sons of King Heavenly Virtue — the bad one — was Victorious, the father of Puṇyaṁitra. Victorious assumed the throne in South India after his father died. He then made life difficult for the Twenty-fifth Ancestor, Vasiṣṭa, the monk who his father (King Heavenly Virtue) had welcomed and patronized. When King Victorious did so, his son Puṇyaṁitra remonstrated with him and was imprisoned as a result. After Vasiṣṭa proved his spiritual legitimacy, Puṇyaṁitra was released from prison and became the monk’s disciple.

4 After the king, Heavenly Virtue, died (ō Tentoku hōjite nochi 王天徳崩じて後). 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-fifth Ancestor, Vasiṣṭa”:

《景德傳燈録》時彼國王名天徳。迎請供養。王有二子。一是凶暴而色力充盛。一是柔和而長嬰疾苦。祖乃為陳因果。王即頓釋所疑。(T 2076.51.215b12-14).
太子得勝即位。復信外道致難于祖。太子不如密多、進諫以至囚焉。王遽問曰：‘予國素絕妖怪，師所傳者當是何宗？’祖曰：‘王國昔來實無邪法。我所得者即是佛宗。’王曰：‘佛滅已千二百載，師從誰得耶？’祖曰：‘飲光大士親受佛印，展轉至二十四世師子尊者。’王曰：‘予聞，師子比丘不能免於刑戮。何能傳法後人？’祖曰：‘我師難未起時，密授我信衣法偈以顯師承。’王曰：‘其衣在何？’祖即出囊中衣示王，王命焚之。五色相鮮，薪盡如故。"王即追悔，致禮師子。真嗣既明，乃赦太子。太子遂求出家。祖問太子曰：‘汝欲出家當為何事？’曰：‘不為俗事。’祖曰：‘不為何事？’曰：‘當為佛事。’祖曰：‘太子智慧天至必諸聖降迹，可許出家。’（T 2076.51.215b17-c3）。

bewitching tricksters (C. yaoguai 妖怪; J. yōkai). In this context, the reference is evidently to self-serving preachers of false religions.
was transmitted in turn down through twenty-four generations, reaching Venerable Simha. I got it from him.” The king said, “I have heard that the Simha Bhikṣu was unable to avoid punishment by execution. How, then, was he able to transmit the dharma to a later person?” The Ancestor [Vasiṣṭa] replied, “Before the trouble occurred, my master [Simha] secretly bestowed on me the robe of proof and a dharma verse, which shows the ancestral succession.” The king asked, “Where is that robe?” The Ancestor [Vasiṣṭa] thereupon removed the robe from his bag and showed it to the king. The king ordered that it be burned. Its five colors were beautiful, and when the fire had exhausted its fuel, it remained just as it had been. The king thereupon repented and paid obeisance. Once Simha’s rightful inheritance had been clarified, the prince [Puṇyamitra] was pardoned. Consequently, the prince wished to go forth from household life. The Ancestor [Vasiṣṭa] questioned the prince [Puṇyamitra], saying, “For the sake of what matter do you wish to go forth from household life?” ...and so on, down to...1 The Ancestor [Vasiṣṭa] permitted him to go forth from household life.

**INVESTIGATION [拈提]**

Thereafter, [Puṇyamitra] served as an attendant [to Vasiṣṭa] for six years. Later, when [Vasiṣṭa] transmitted the Tathāgata’s treasury of the true dharma eye [to Puṇyamitra], he said: “Beginning with the Tathāgata, this has been entrusted from successor to successor down to the present day. You will receive transmission, and will be able to convert the multitude of beings.” When the Master [Puṇyamitra] received this secret prediction, he felt relieved in body and mind.

1 and so on, down to (naiṣi 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.
In the preceding episode, he [Puṇyamitra] expressed that, “It will not be for the sake of those matters.”¹ Thus, [Vasiṣṭa] asked, “You wish to go forth from household life; what matters will you undertake?” [Puṇyamitra] replied, “I will undertake buddha-matters.” What he [Puṇyamitra] meant when he [initially] spoke of “matters” was worldly matters. Truly, the fact that going forth from household life is, fundamentally, not for the sake of “[those] matters” is something that this should make us aware of. What he meant when he [subsequently] spoke of “[buddha-] matters” was not one’s own matters, and not others’ matters. Thus he said, “It is not for the sake of worldly matters.”

設ひ髪を剃り、衣を染て形を佛子に似せたりとも、尚ほ自見他見を免られず。若し男女の相を離れずんば、悉く是れ俗事なり、佛事に非ず。且らく人人の本心に依て談ずる時、都て佛事なく、俗事なしと雖も、末了本心を知らざれば且らく俗事と謂ふ。既に本心を明らめ得るを、之を佛事と名く。

Even if one shaves one’s head and dyes one’s robes, making oneself look like a child of the Buddha, one still does not avoid views of self and views of others. If one does not detach from male and female appearances, then everything is a worldly matter, not a buddha-matter. Even when one bases one’s discussion on every person’s original mind, supposing that everything is neither a buddha-matter nor a worldly matter, if one does not yet know the original mind, then it is still called a worldly matter. When one has been able to clarify the original mind, that is called “buddha-matter.”

本心知得の時、尚ほ生相なく滅相なし。何に況や迷人なり悟人ならんや。是の如く見得する時、四大五蘊尚ほ存せず、三界六道、豈立することあらんや。故に家として捨つべき所なきも、身として置くべき所なし。故に出家と謂ふ。住すべき所なきが故に家破れ人亡じぬ。故に生死涅槃ともに拂はざるに自から盡き、菩提煩惱捨てざるに本來離る。

When one gets to know the original mind, then there is no longer the mark of arising or the mark of cessation. How, then, could there be deluded people or awakened people? When one is able to see in this way, even the four primary elements and five aggregates do not exist. How, then, could the three realms and six destinies possibly be established? Therefore, there is no place that, as a household, needs to be abandoned. And, there is no place that, as a person, needs to be arranged. Therefore, he [Puṇyamitra]

¹ “It will not be for the sake of those matters” (sono koto no tame ni arazaru 其事の為に非ざる). This quote is supposed to be identical to that attributed to Puṇyamitra in the Root Case. However, there we find the words “particular matter” (C. bieshi 別事; J. betsuji), while here we find “that matter” (C. qishi 其事; J. kiji, sono koto), which is the phrasing also found in the Root Case in the Kenkon’in manuscript.
spoke of going forth from household life. Since there is no place one could
dwell, this is "home destroyed, people dead." Thus, birth and death and
nirvāṇa together, without being swept away, are exhausted of themselves.
And, without abandoning bodhi or mental afflictions, one is free from
them from the start.

It is not that things are like this only in the present day. From kalpa to kalpa,
even through the four kalpas of formation, abiding, decay, and emptiness,
it is fundamentally unchanged. Even in the four marks of arising, abiding,
changing, and ceasing, one is not fettered. Expansive, it is like the sky that
has no inside or outside. In its purity, it is similar to water that has no front
or back. Every person’s original mind, without exception, is like this.

Furthermore, you should not fear being a householder, and you should
not be boastful about going forth from household life. Just put an end to
seeking outwardly. You must investigate by facing self. To give this a try, all
of you, for a while keep your mind from scattering east and west, keep your
eyes from turning in front and behind, and come to see things in detail. If
you do that, then at this time, what can be called “self,” and what can be
called “other”? Here, the mutual facing of self and other does not exist.
Moreover, naming what could we call it good or evil? If things are “such,”
then the original mind will from the start be revealed, its brightness like
that of the sun or moon. There will be no place that, being hidden, remains
unilluminated.

So, to raise and comment on the aforementioned episode, again I have
some humble words. You should listen!

1 "home destroyed, people dead" (ie yabure hito bōjin 家破れ人亡じぬ). This saying
is also quoted in the Verse on the Old Case section of Chapter 4 of the Denkōroku.
VERSE ON THE OLD CASE 【頌古】

本地平常無寸草。 宗風何處作安排。
The original ground is flat and unchanging, without an inch of grass.  
In what place could the lineage winds possibly produce order? ¹

¹ In what place could the lineage winds possibly produce order? (C. zongfeng hechu zuo anpai 宗風何处作安排; J. shūfū, izure no tokoro ni ka anpai wo nasan 宗風、何れの處にか安排を作さん). This poem plays off a famous Confucian saying that compares the influence that a noble and humane ruler has on his people to the effect that a strong wind has on a field of grass: “When the wind blows, the grass bends.” The Chinese expression zongfeng 宗風 (J. shūfū), translated elsewhere as “lineage style” but rendered here as “lineage winds,” refers in this verse to the influence that Chan teachings (and the line of ancestral teachers that perpetuates them) can have in helping people gain awakening. The somewhat ironic point of the poem, however, is that from the standpoint of awakening there is no “grass” (C. cao 草; J. sō, kusa) — no deluded beings — to be “ordered” or “arranged” (C. anpai 安排; J. anpai), i.e. helped or saved, in the first place. → wind.