



十二祖馬鳴大士

The Twelfth Patriarch Ashvagoshā

宣公上人講於1978年5月10日
羅親哲、林果富、李明光 英譯

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BIOGRAPHIES | 人物誌

大士，波羅奈國人。謁十一祖，問曰：「我欲識佛，何者即是？」祖曰：「汝欲識佛，不識者是。」答曰：「佛既不識，焉知是乎？」祖曰：「既不識佛，焉知不是？」

大士豁然省悟。祖為剃度，乃曰：「此人昔為毗舍利國王，運其神力，分身為蠶，國人得衣。後生中印土，馬人悲戀，因號馬鳴。如來記曰：『吾滅後六百年，當有賢者，度人無量，繼吾傳化』，今正是時。」遂付以法。後得迦毗摩羅，即入龍奮迅三昧，挺身空中，如日輪相，然後示滅。

「大士，波羅奈國人」：十二祖馬鳴大士是波羅奈國人。

「謁十一祖，問曰：我欲識佛，何者即是？」：他去拜見十一祖，問說：「我想認識佛，什麼是佛呢？」

Ashvagoshā, a great hero, was from Varanasi. When he went to pay respect to the Eleventh Patriarch he asked, “I want to know the Buddha. Tell me, who is the Buddha?” The Patriarch replied, “You want to know the Buddha? That which does not know is just the Buddha” Ashvagoshā continued to ask, “If that does not know what the Buddha is, how could I know that is (the Buddha)?” The Patriarch replied, “Since that does not know what Buddha is, how could you know that is not the Buddha?”

With this, Ashvagoshā suddenly awoke, and the Eleventh Patriarch shaved his head and he became a monk. The Eleventh Patriarch then said, “[Ashvagoshā] was the King of Vaishali, using his spiritual powers to transform his body into numerous silkworms, provided clothes to the people. In another lifetime, he was born in Central India, and upon his birth horses cried in gratitude. Thus he was named ‘Horse-Whinny’ (Ashvagoshā). The Tathagata made a prediction saying, ‘Six hundred years after my passing, there will be a worthy one who will liberate immeasurable numbers of people from suffering and become a successor of my teaching.’ Now the time has come.” Then and there, the Eleventh Patriarch bestowed the Dharma upon him. Afterwards, he met Kapimāla (who became his Dharma-heir). Ashvagoshā entered the Dragon’s Might and Swiftly Samādhi, rose into the sky, appearing as the orb of the Sun, and entered stillness.

「祖曰：汝欲識佛，不識者是。」：十一祖說：「你想認識佛，你不認識的就是。」因為你沒有識嘛！你想認識佛，可見你是還沒有認識呢！所以說汝欲識佛，不識者就是佛！

「答曰：佛既不識，焉知是乎？」：馬鳴大士就回答：「佛，我又不認識，怎麼知道他是佛呢？」

「祖曰：既不識佛，焉知不是？」：十一祖就說：「你不認識佛，你怎麼又知道他不是佛呢？」這都是機鋒轉語、打機鋒。這兩個人辯論，你既然不認識佛，你又怎麼知道不是佛呢？

「大士豁然省悟，祖為剃度，乃曰」：大士，就是馬鳴菩薩；豁然，就是豁然貫通；省悟，就不是睡覺，是醒了。這樣子，十一祖就為他剃度，說了他過去生的因緣。

「此人昔為毗舍利國王，運其神力，分身為蠶，國人得衣」：這個入以前是毗舍利的國王，這個國家分上、中、下三類人；上類的人身上有光明，衣服、飲食自然應念而生；中類的人身上就沒有光明，衣服、飲食必須要求取才能得到；而最下類的人，沒有衣服穿，就好像馬裸露一樣。這個國王悲憫這類人，就用神通變化的願力，把他的身體分開變為很多蠶。因為他變了很多蠶子，蠶吐了很多絲，所以大家都有衣服穿了。

「後生中印土，馬人悲戀，因號馬鳴」：因為這樣的功德，所以就生到中印度。當他捨離毗舍利國時，那些馬人都感念他的恩德，對他戀戀不捨，全都悲鳴起來，所以得了「馬鳴」這個稱號。他大約也常常作馬鳴，像馬哭的樣子，來度化馬類的眾生，因此號稱「馬鳴菩薩」。總之，他這個名號是怎麼來的，並不重要的，怎麼說怎麼合理就可以了。

待續

Commentary:

Ashvagoshā, a great hero, was from Varanasi. The Twelfth Patriarch 'Horse-Whinny' was a man born in Varanasi.

When he went to pay respect to the Eleventh Patriarch, he asked, "I want to know the Buddha. Tell me, who is the Buddha?" He went to pay a visit to the Eleventh Patriarch and asked the Patriarch, "I want to recognize who the Buddha is. What is the Buddha?"

The Patriarch replied, "You want to know the Buddha? He is just the person who doesn't know." The Eleventh Patriarch then said, "You wish to recognize the Buddha, but the Buddha is just that who doesn't recognize." It is because you don't recognize the Buddha! If you wish to recognize the Buddha, it just shows that you have not recognized the Buddha! If you want to recognize the Buddha, just that who does not recognize is the Buddha!

Ashvagoshā continued to ask, "Since I do not know the Buddha, how can I know I am he?" Horse-Whinny Bodhisattva then asked, "If I do not recognize the Buddha, how will I know who the Buddha is?"

The Patriarch replied, "You don't even know the Buddha, so how do you know you are not him?" The Eleventh Patriarch then said, "If you don't recognize the Buddha, how can you know that he is not the Buddha?" This is the Chan's repartee between these two: "Since you don't recognize the Buddha, how will you know whether it is the Buddha or not?"

With this, Ashvagoshā suddenly awoke, the Eleventh Patriarch shaved his head, and he became a monk. The Eleventh Patriarch then said. To be awakened means that [Ashvagoshā] was no longer asleep, but thoroughly awake. With this, the Eleventh Patriarch shaved [Ashvagoshā's] head and explained to him the causes and conditions of his previous lives.

[Ashvagoshā] was once the King of Vaishali, using his spiritual powers to transform his body into numerous silkworms, provided clothes for the people. This person was the King of Vaishali in the past. People of this country were divided into three classes: the higher class, the middle class, and the lower class. People of the upper class shined light from their bodies, and food and clothing appeared as soon as they had thoughts of them. People of the middle class did not have light emitting from their bodies and they needed to seek for food and clothing. People of the lower class did not have any clothes, and were like naked horses. This king took pity on his people, and so with his spiritual powers, he transformed himself into immeasurable numbers of silkworms. With many silkworms producing lots of silk, everyone was able to have clothes to wear.

In another lifetime, he was born in Central India, and upon his birth horses cried in gratitude. Thus he was named "Horse-Whinny (Ashvagoshā)." Because of his accumulated merit and virtue, he was able to be reborn in Central India. After he left Vaishali, all the horses remembered his virtue with gratitude. They missed him so badly that they cried out in admiration. Therefore, the king was given the name "Horse-Whinny." He might have often produced sounds, whinnying like a horse. Since he taught and transformed horses and their like, so he was named "Horse-Whinny Bodhisattva."

To be continued