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Lotus Sutra No. 1
February 1968

During Sesshin the *Lotus Sutra* will not be appropriate for the lecture, but I want to [begin] the introduction to the Sutra during training period.

"And the other sons of the Sugata who, striving after superior knowledge, have constantly accomplished their various tasks, them also they admonish to enlightenment."

Maitreya continues, in the form of a verse stanza, his address to Manjusri. This is the eleventh one. The "Son of Sugata" means a Bodhisattva. And this is also one of the ten names of Buddha, but here it means Bodhisattva. "The son of the Sugata." Son of the Buddha.

And twelve is, *"From this place, O Mangughosha, I see and hear such things and thousands of kotis of other particulars besides; I will only describe some of them."* Mangughosha is Manjusri. And he saw many things, and he is going to describe them. The thirteenth:

"I see in many fields Bodhisattvas by many thousands of kotis, like sands of Ganges, who are producing enlightenment according to the different degree of their power,"--many fields of Bodhisattvas, many worlds. *"I see in many fields Bodhisattvas by many thousands of kotis, like sands of Ganges."* We say, if it is many, "like sands of Ganges."

"Who are producing enlightenment according to the different degree of their power." According to their power, they will attain enlightenment. "Attainment"--the attainment will not be exactly the same, but, according to their power, people will have various attainments, big and small, respectively.

In the *Lotus Sutra*, perfect knowledge is like a cloud or rain. Once it comes down, various plants, big and small, and trees, will gain the mercy of the rain, according to their forms and nature. But what they gain is the same. This is an important thought.

For instance, men and woman are different, but we Buddhists understand them to have the same virtue. Or, we say, because we are not the same, we have the same virtue. If it is the same--nothing is the same, but even though they are same--if they are the same, they have no virtue, because each is different. Each one has its own special value which you cannot compare with some other value. So what we talk about is not some exchanged value or comparative value. What we talk about is absolute value for each being. So, because we are different, we have absolute value. This is important an point.

And, and next one:

"There are some who charitably bestow wealth, gold, silver, gold money, pearls, jewels, conch shells, stones, coral, male and female slaves, horses, and sheep."

This is one of the Bodhisattvas practices, *dana prajna paramita*. The slaves are also a kind of fortune or wealth.

"Horses and sheep, as well as litters adorned with jewels. They are sending gifts with glad hearts, developing themselves for superior enlightenment, in the hope of gaining the vehicle."

This is also *dana prajna paramita*. "In the hope of gaining the vehicle": I don't know how

to say this, but, because there is a door for Supreme Knowledge, they practice alms-giving, or *dana prajna paramita*. The next verse is:

"(Thus they think): 'The best and most excellent vehicle in the whole of the threefold world is the Buddha-vehicle magnified by the Sugatas. May I, forsooth, soon gain it after my spending such gifts.'"

"The best and most excellent vehicle in the whole of the threefold world": this threefold world is the desire world, form world, and no non-form world.

"Some give carriages yoked with four horses and furnished with benches, flowers, banners, and flags; others give objects made of precious substances.

Some, again, give their children and wives; others their own flesh; (or) offer, when bidden, their hands and feet, striving to gain supreme enlightenment."

This may sound very funny, but at that time it was...for me it looks very funny because I feel as though I cannot understand it, you know. "Some, again, give their children and wives; others their own flesh." This is understandable, more understandable.

"Some give their heads, others their eyes, others their dear own body, and after cheerfully bestowing their gifts they aspire to the knowledge of the Tathagatas."

In this case, you know, we put emphasis on practice, rather than on what we will gain by it. We should understand the value of practice, rather than what we will gain by this kind of almsgiving practice.

"Here and there, O Manjusri, I behold beings who have abandoned their flourishing kingdoms, harems, and continents, left all their counsellors and kinsmen." "Counsellors and kinsmen," like Shakyamuni Buddha. *"Here and there, O Manjusri, I behold beings who have abandoned their flourishing kingdoms, harems, and continents, left all their counsellors and kinsmen, and betaken themselves to the guides of the world to ask for the most excellent law, for the sake of bliss; they put on reddish-yellow robes, and shave hair and beard."*

"Betaken themselves to the guides of the world..." The "guide of the world" is of course Shakyamuni Buddha. "Betaken themselves to the guides of the world to ask for the most excellent law, for the sake of bliss; they put on reddish-yellow robes." "Kesa"--we call this robe *o-kesa*, *okesa*, and this is *koromo*. And "reddish-yellow robes," means "law." *Kesa* is a transliteration of the Sanskrit *kesa*. It means "subdued color." By "subdued color," mostly we mean black. You know, a black and bluish color, something like navy blue. At *Eiheiji* some monks wear a bluish-green or blue-like color, or black, or what we call a "red leave color," or like a yellowish-brown color--like this. Those colors are called subdued colors. Our robes should be those colors. And there are many other colors which we are allowed to use. Anyway, those colors are the "subdued colors" according to the scriptures or precepts.

As you know, the *okesa* is made of material which people are not using any more. And Buddha collected that material and purified it, and sewed it together, like this. The most important robe for us is the *okesa*, not the Chinese or Japanese dress. And there are traditional, strict rules about how to make it. Joyce, you know, is studying how, is actually making her *okesa* by hand, stitch after stitch, reciting the Sutra in Japan. That is how we do it. You are laughing, but you will do it, you know. Now you are laughing. *"I see also many Bodhisattvas like monks, living in the forest, and others inhabiting the empty wilderness, engaged in reciting and reading."* "Living in the forest": this kind of

practice is called "practice in the forest." And the next one:

"And some Bodhisattvas I see, who, full of wisdom (or constancy), betake themselves to mountain caves, where by cultivating and meditating the Buddha knowledge they arrive at its perception."

As Govinde said, the Tibetan translation is said to be very accurate, and here it says "mountain caves," but according to the Tibetan translation it is "mountain valley." A mountain valley like Tassajara. Of course there are two meanings, but here the Chinese translation and Tibetan translation translate it the "valley." We have two translations, but both Chinese translations translate it as "valley." But, as it has two meanings, some people translate it as this translation does: cave. And next:

"Others who have renounced all sensual desires, by purifying their own self, have cleared their sphere and obtained the five transcendent faculties, live in the wilderness, as (true) sons of the Sugata."

"...sensual desires, by purifying their own self, have cleared their sphere and obtained the five transcendent faculties." This is so-called "Arhat practice." To attain Arhatship they have to purify their own self and they have to extinguish their sensual desires. First of all we have to stop thinking. Thinking--we should not stop, but we should be free from thinking. Thinking desires and mental joy and physical joy. In this way we should purify our own self. To purify our own self is to purify our surrounding. In this way we are supposed to obtain the five transcendent faculties. One is mystic power, and next is clairvoyance, or the ability to see through things; next is the ability to know others' minds; and then the power to know one's own past lives, and one's own karma. And Arhats have six faculties. The last one is the perfect knowledge faculty. After extinguishing all the physical and mental feelings, they will have perfect wisdom. That is the last one. But for Bodhisattvas they have five. So here we may count five faculties.

"Some are standing firm, the feet put together and the hands joined in token of respect towards the leaders, and are praising joyfully the king of the leading Ginas in thousands of stanzas."

King of the Ginas means Buddha.

"Some thoughtful, meek, and tranquil, who have mastered the niceties of the course of duty, question the highest of men about the law, and retain in their memory what they have learnt."

"And I see here and there some sons of the principal Gina, after completely developing their own self, are preaching the law to many kotis of living beings with myriads of illustrations and reasons."

"Completely developing their own self," means to control their life, and completely develop their own self. *"Are preaching the law to many kotis of living beings with many myriads of illustrations and reasons."* Like Buddha.

"Joyfully they proclaim the law, rousing many Bodhisattvas; after conquering the Evil One with his hosts and vehicles, they strike the drum of the law."

"I see some sons of the Sugata, humble, calm, and quiet in conduct, living under the command of the Sugatas, and honored by men, gods, goblins, and Titans." This was the Buddhist idea character: humbleness, calmness, and quiet in conduct. "Living under the command of the Sugatas, and honored by men, gods, goblins, and Titans."

"Others, again, who have retired to woody thickets, are saving the creatures in the hells by emitting radiance from their body, and rouse them to enlightenment."

There are some sons of the Gina who dwell in the forest, abiding in vigour, completely renouncing sloth, and actively engaged in walking; it is by energy that they are striving for supreme enlightenment."

This is *Shojin prajna paramita*. The bodhisattva has six *prajna paramitas*. *Dana prajna paramita*, and precepts...*prajna paramita*. Alms-giving and precepts observation, and vigorous practice, and patience, and zazen practice, and wisdom, *prajna paramita*. Those are the six. Here, this is the vigorous practice *prajna paramita*. And the next one: *"Others complete their course by keeping a constant purity and an unbroken morality like precious stones and jewels; by morality do these strive for supreme enlightenment. Some sons of the Gina, whose strength consists in forbearance, patiently endure abuse, censure, and threats from proud monks. They try to attain enlightenment by dint of forbearance."*

This is the third *prajna paramita*. *Prajna paramita* of endurance.

"Some sons of the Gina, whose strength consists in forbearance, patiently endure abuse, censure, and threats from proud monks": Proud monks will give various critical words, and sometimes blame their conduct. But the bodhisattvas should not be disturbed by those words or treatment. They try to attain enlightenment by dint of forbearance. This is the third *prajna paramita*.

"Further, I see Bodhisattvas, who have forsaken all wanton pleasures, shun unwise companions and delight in having intercourse with genteel men (Aryas)."

This is supposed to be a very important practice: to choose your friends and to live in a suitable place for practice. It doesn't say zazen practice, but actually it means zazen practice.

"Further, I see Bodhisattvas." This zazen practice was not included in the prose part of this Sutra, but here we have it...this 34th and 35th verse (line?) is about zazen Practice.

"Further, I see Bodhisattvas, who have forsaken all wanton pleasures, shun unwise companions and delight in having intercourse with genteel men": if you want to practice zazen, it is necessary to choose your friends, to have good friends. To be in good contact with your friends, good friends. Then naturally you will have good practice. Dogen Zenji says zazen practice is like going through the mist. If you go through the mist, your robes will be wet; even though you don't notice it, your robe will be naturally wet. When you go out in a sudden shower, even though you feel your robe is wet, it doesn't get through your robe. But when you get wet in the mist, even though you don't feel it, the moisture will penetrate into your body, even. That is how we should practice zazen. And next verse, the 35th:

"Who, with avoidance of any distraction of thoughts and with attentive mind, during thousands of kotis of years have meditated in the caves of the wilderness; these strive for enlightenment by dint of meditation." Attentive mind is very important. From the beginning it always has been important point for our practice. Attentive mind: as a practice counting breathing is a very old and traditional way to always have an attentive mind.

Does someone know what "meditation" means? "To meditate" looks like "contemplate on something," but I don't know what "meditate" means. But someone said it can be translated as "to be attentive to something." So if we understand meditation, and if we use the word "meditate" in that sense, I think it is a good translation, but usually by "meditate" we mean to "dwell on something," or to "concentrate on"

something. "Contemplation" is also meditation, but the more fundamental attitude or practice, is attentiveness.

Thank you very much.

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Lotus Sutra No. 2

February 1968

Zen Mountain Center

A ray issued from Buddha's forehead between his eyebrows. Everyone could see many things, and Maitreya Bodhisattva is asking Manjusri why this kind of miraculous sight appears. We have more than ten gathas about those sights. Page 14, number 36 [from *Saddharma-Pundarika* translated by H. Kern]:

Some, again, offer in the presence of the Jinas and the assemblage of disciples gifts (consisting) in food, hard and soft, food [S.R. said "food", but the book says "meat" here] and drink, medicaments for the sick, in plenty and abundance."

Jinas is Buddha. "Food hard and soft" means food or delicacies to sip and to eat, something to chew and something to sip. Soft means something like soup. It says "meat and drink" here, but maybe it is food and drink. He translated it "food hard and soft", and then used "meat" so that he wouldn't use the same word twice. But the first "food" is dishes and delicacies, something to chew, something to sip. And "food and drink" is various foods to eat, and drink, like wine or lemonade. Repetition, you know.

#37: "Others offer in the presence of Jinas and the assemblage of disciples hundreds of *kotis* of clothes, worth thousands of *kotis*, and garments of priceless value."

"They bestow in the presence of the Sugatas hundreds of *kotis* of monasteries which they have caused to be built of precious substances and sandalwood, and which are furnished with numerous lodgings (or couches)."

"Hundreds of *kotis* of monasteries," like Tassajara, "which they have caused to be built of precious substances," like various jewels and stones, "and sandalwood," do you know sandalwood? Sandalwood, "and which are furnished with numerous lodgings (or couches)." These are rather important words which appear many, many times in various scriptures. This is one of the five materials to offer to Buddha--a bed. These lodgings include something like a bed. You put mats on something which has four legs, and a cushion which has cotton, or stuffing, in it, and a bed cover, which is some textile, and a pillow. It is something to sit on sometimes, so it is also something like a couch. Monks or priests are prohibited from using expensive ones, you know. We should not use material made of sheep, or sheepskin. In some countries, like Tibet, the use of skin is allowed. But if we changed the rule so soon [in this country], it would be a violation of the precept. At least, we should not change it in six years. And we are supposed to use the same bed for thirteen years. Nowadays we do not strictly observe this kind of rule, but in the old times they had very strict rules about food and beds and lodging. Here [in the sutra] they see various monasteries built of precious jewels and sandalwood, but this is, of course, not real stone.

"Some present the leaders of men and their disciples with neat and lovely gardens abounding with fruits and beautiful flowers, to serve as places of daily recreation."

The leader of men is, of course, Buddha. "...and their disciples with neat and lovely gardens abounding with fruits and beautiful flowers," like Church Creek, "to serve as places of daily recreation." This translation makes it look very picnic-like, but it is not actually so. After they went begging, in mid-day, when it was very hot, they rested for a while in someone's garden. It is very good to rest, to have something good which is offered by the owner of the house or garden, to put heavy things aside and rest under a tree. This is our custom, you know. In Japan we do this also. When it is very cold, we may be ushered into a warm room with a big charcoal fire, and they may serve *mochi* with sugar, and, sometimes, New Year's dishes. And for a while we can rest at that home. So this may be a kind of afternoon recreation, or afternoon rest. It does not mean resting and having a good time all day long. Rather, after the practice of begging, for a while, only when it was hot, they would rest at someone's home. They [in this sutra] could see Buddha and his disciples resting at some beautiful home.

"When they have, with joyful feelings, made such various and splendid donations, they rouse their energy in order to obtain enlightenment; these are those who try to reach supreme enlightenment by means of charitableness."

Most people who met with Buddha wanted to be his disciple, if possible. Those who could not be his disciples would contribute something. They wanted to participate in Buddha's work and to feel better. That is what it really means. "These are those who try to reach supreme enlightenment by means of charitableness." This is more natural, you know. It is something like a special practice for attaining enlightenment. It was so, for the bodhisattva. The bodhisattva has six *paramitas*: *dana paramita*, *sila paramita*, *ksanti* or *patience paramita*, *zeal* or *virya paramita*, *meditation* or *dhyana paramita*, and *prajna paramita*. Those are bodhisattva practices. But they did this kind of practice more naturally; later we counted them, like the six *prajna paramitas* or four practices of the bodhisattva.

"Others set forth the law of quietness, by many myriads of illustrations and proofs; they preach it to thousands of *kotis* of living beings; these are tending to supreme enlightenment by science."

Science? Maybe by wisdom. It says science, but science is very modern. Enlightenment by wisdom. "The law of quietness," we should be quiet, first of all--that is meditation, "by many myriads of illustrations and proofs." If you sit quietly, you will be like this. This is the proof. And how you keep quiet is the illustration. "They preach it to thousands of *kotis* of living beings." Just to sit is to preach Buddha's teaching to every being.

"(There are) sons of the Sugata who try to reach enlightenment by wisdom; they understand the law of indifference and avoid acting at the antinomy (of things), unattached like birds in the sky."

By having perfect wisdom, they understand the law of indifference. Indifference means non-action, non-thinking, non-activity. "And avoid acting at the antinomy," dualistic action, "unattached like birds in the sky." We say, "Bird flies like a bird, fish swims like a fish." That is that.

"Further, I see,"--"I" means Maitreya Bodhisattva--"O Manjughosha, many Bodhisattvas who have displayed steadiness under the rule of the departed Sugatas, and now

are worshipping the relics of the Jinas."

We have already seen many things. First of all, we saw many Buddhas entering meditation, and we saw this earth was shaking in six ways, and a ray issued from the Buddha's forehead, and we saw people incarnated in the six states of living beings, heavenly, human, animal, *asura*, hungry ghost, hell. And we also saw buddhas in each world, and heard the Law preached by them. We saw Buddha's four congregations: monks, nuns, male and female devotees, and we saw bodhisattvas who are helping others, and Buddha finally entering Nirvana. And the last vision will be building *stupas* and mounds for Buddha, and worshipping Buddha's tomb. This is the whole story of this sutra.

"I see thousands of *kotis* of *stupas*, numerous as the sand of the Ganges, which have been raised by these sons of the Jina and now adorn *kotis* of grounds."

In each of innumerable worlds there is a Buddha who took final Nirvana and who adorned the *kotis* of lands with this kind of *stupa*. Buddha did not encourage his disciples to make *stupas*, but some of them built one for a nun when she passed away. Mostly, *stupas* were built by Mahayana Buddhists. We have a certain way of building *stupas*. They are round, and underneath the roof is an umbrella for protecting Buddha's mound. [or, the roof is an umbrella for protecting Buddha's mound?] If you go to Japan Center, you will see a *stupa*. The top of the building is a symbol of the center of the umbrella. And in the center of the building there is supposed to be a *sarira* [relic] of Buddha.

"Those magnificent *Stupas*, made of seven precious substances, with their thousands of *kotis* of umbrellas and banners, measure in height no less than 5000 *yojanas* and 2000 in circumference."

"They are always decorated with flags; a multitude of bells is constantly heard sounding; men, gods, goblins, and Titans pay their worship with flowers, perfumes, and music."

Goblins are *yakshas* and titans are *rakshasas*, *devas* who devour human beings, sucking our blood and eating our flesh. There was supposed to be an island south of ancient India where many *rakshasas* were living. That island could be Ceylon--I don't know. There were five hundred merchants who wanted to cross the ocean but were blown by a hurricane or storm to the island of *rakshasas*. The *rakshasas* disguised themselves as decent people and invited the merchants to a beautiful castle. But at midnight the merchants climbed the wall of the castle and saw another castle. They climbed higher and peeked inside the castle, where many *rakshasas* were devouring human beings. Some were still alive. So they were very frightened and discussed how to escape. Fortunately they were able to get out of the castle. This kind of story is told in some Buddhist scriptures, it is said--I haven't read it. When you recite this sutra, *yakshas* and *rakshasas* always get together and frighten us.

"Such honor do the sons of the Sugata render to the relics of the Jinas, so that all directions of space are brightened as by the celestial coral trees in full blossom.

"From this spot I behold all this; those numerous *kotis* of creatures; both this world and heaven covered with flowers, owing to the single ray shot forth by the Jina."

Those things were seen by the people who gathered at Rajagriha when the ray issued from Buddha's forehead.

"O how powerful is the Leader of men! how extensive and bright is his knowledge!

that a single beam darted by him over the world renders visible so many thousands of fields!

"We are astonished at seeing this sign and this wonder, so great, so incomprehensible. Explain me the matter, O Manjusvara! the sons of Buddha are anxious to know it.

"The four classes of the congregation in joyful expectation gaze on thee, O hero, and on me; gladden (their hearts); remove their doubts; grant a revelation, O son of Sugata!

"Why is it that the Sugata has now emitted such a light? O how great is the power of the Leader of men! O how extensive and holy is his knowledge!

"That one ray extending from him all over the world makes visible many thousands of fields. It must be for some purpose that this great ray has been emitted.

"Is the Lord of men to show the primordial laws which he, the Highest of men, discovered on the terrace of enlightenment? Or is he to prophesy the Bodhisattvas their future destiny?

"There must be a weighty reason why so many thousands of fields have been rendered visible, variegated, splendid, and shining with gems, while Buddhas of infinite sight are appearing.

"Maitreya asks the son of Jina; men, gods, goblins, and Titans, the four classes of the congregation, are eagerly awaiting what answer Manjusvara shall give in explanation.

"Whereupon Manjusri, the prince royal, addressed Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, and the whole assembly of Bodhisattvas (in these words):"

I must continue this for two or three lectures. Do you have some questions?

Q: Roshi, you said not to stop thinking, but to be free from thinking, and I wonder if you could explain what it means to be free from thinking?

R: What I meant was don't be bound by your thinking. When you reach a conclusion by thinking, you will have some definite idea. Actually, that is why you think: to have a definite answer. But that is not possible.

Q: So what should you do?

R: You can think, and thinking will help you, of course. But you should know, at the same time, that that answer will not be definite. So you think, but you are free from thinking. That is what I meant: to have what we call a double-edged blade. So double-edge-think: don't think and think. It works two ways. This is the double nature, the double construction of Buddhist philosophy: thinking construction and non-thinking construction. Some other question?

Q: Last night you mentioned the world of form, the world of desire, and the world of no form. Would you explain what the world of form is and how that differs from the world of desire?

R: The world of desire is the world of attachment. The world of form is the world as it is, including desires. We have desires; everything has a kind of desire. But if we observe desire as it is, that is also the form world, not the desire world. The world of no form is easily obtained in your deep zazen. When you do not feel your body, you're deep, you know. That is the world of non-form. Those are the worlds where every being exists.

Q: In Hinduism they often wonder about good karma and bad karma and merit. And when the Emperor asked Bodhidharma about the merit in making many temples,

Bodhidharma said, "No merit." In what sense is there merit in reading or chanting the sutra?

R: To sit is to read the sutra. We understand in the opposite way. Let me explain this point. This is a very good question. In another school, for instance, they say, "You should read the scripture with your body. You should experience it." When they say this, it means that even if a person is going to be killed, the sword will be broken in two, piece by piece. If that kind of thing happens to him, it means he reads the scripture by his experience, with his body.

We also say you should read the scripture with your body, but what we mean by that is that not just this scripture only has eternal truth. Universal truth is truly with this scripture, with bodhisattvas, with various kinds of followers of Buddhism, and with rivers and mountains and everything. So to read this scripture with the body means to find the truth of it in everything, in everyday activity. There's a big difference. So the merit of reading this scripture is in finding the truth of it in our everyday activity. We read this scripture so that we can understand more perfectly and become familiar with the truth. This is our attitude toward scriptures.

This kind of statement is in this scripture. So we should observe everything as being the things described in this scripture. The emperor's building of temples is, of course, merit, not because he built temples, but because of his understanding of Buddhism and helping. That is merit. Real merit is not a matter of building temples or not building temples, or a matter of big and small. This is our understanding.

Q: Roshi, when we chant the *Maka [Hannya Haramita] Shin Gyo*, in what sense is there merit? And can we give this merit to others?

R: Yes, to help. When you become familiar with the *Shin Gyo*, what you will do will naturally explain your understanding, your attitude. Even though you don't realize it, there is a big difference between the people who can recite sutras and those who cannot. So, of course, that you can recite sutras will help others. From my cabin, when I am resting, I can see out of the window in front of my sink. Before you enter the restroom, you bow. And I think you are just doing it, you know, like this, maybe, because you get accustomed to it. But I thought, if people saw someone bowing to that place, what kind of feelings would they have? The people might not know what it meant, but I think you would give them some feeling. You just do it, you know. And that's a very valuable thing. This is the same thing as reciting the sutra.

Buddha's disciples converted many learned scholars to Buddhism, like Sariputra, who converted when he saw a monk walking on the street with a very steady feeling. So, we say that each one of the 250 characters of the "Prajna Paramita Sutra" is a bodhisattva, is Buddha. This is more than just how we understand it. That is this merit for us and for others.

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**Lotus Sutra No. 3
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[Transcription checked and edited by Brian Fikes]

Maitreya asked Manjusri what was going to happen, and Manjusri started to answer that question:

"Whereupon Manjusri, the prince royal, addressed Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, and the whole assembly of Bodhisattvas (in these words): It is the intention of the Tathagata, young men of good family, to begin a grand discourse for the teaching of the law, to pour the great rain of the law, to make resound the great drum of the law, to raise the great banner of the law, to kindle the great torch of the law, to blow the great conch trumpet of the law, and to strike the great timbale of the law."

Manjusri is starting to say something about what he experienced before, because the same thing happened to him when he was studying Dharma in his previous life. There were various names for him: Manjusri, Manjusvara, or Manjughosha. "Manjusri" means an "auspicious man," and "Manjusvara" or "Manjughosha" means a "man who has a beautiful voice." "Whereupon Manjusri, the prince royal, addressed Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, and the whole assembly of Bodhisattvas." In this sutra the bodhisattva has the main position. You can almost say this sutra was told for bodhisattvas and to bodhisattvas. "...the whole assembly of Bodhisattvas." These words are repeated maybe twice or more in chapter fifteen, the famous chapter we recite on Dogen Zenji's memorial day each month. Old monks in Eiheiji can recite this sutra almost by heart--in Chinese, not in Japanese. Zen Buddhists chant the twenty-eight volumes of this sutra. In former days they could recite very well. I cannot recite so well, but old monks can recite it quite easily in a short time, in Chinese.

Manjusri started in this way: "It is the intention of the Tathagata, young men of good family," these words are also repeated many times in this sutra, "to begin a grand discourse for the teaching of the law, to pour the great rain of the law, to make resound the great drum of the law." In Sanskrit drum is "dantobishi" [?], from the drum sound, "don, don, don". It is a very interesting name for drum. In festivals in Japan people strike a big drum: "dongbish, dongbish, dondabish". The great drum of the law. "...to raise the great banner of the law, to kindle the great torch of the law, to blow the great conch trumpet of the law,..." Do you know the conch trumpet? In Japan, in Shingon temples, the Tantric Buddhists have a big conch trumpet. "Boooo." It goes this way, [demonstrating it in the air]. "...and to strike the great timbale of the law."

This repetition of various instruments is not the same in different translations. Scholars who are studying this sutra compare the versions: in the Tibetan rendering this is missing, in the Nepalese this is missing, in the Chinese rendering this is missing. In this way they try to figure out how those scriptures were introduced to China or Nepal or Tibet. Those are very important studies, but... And I have Doctor Watanabe's translation here. He compares the new and old Chinese renderings to the Tibetan, Nepalese and Pali. So if you want to study this, I have various proofs for this material. But I must continue my lecture as quickly as possible.

"Again, it is the intention of the Tathagata, young men of good family, to make a grand exposition of the law this very day." Right now he will explain the grand exposition of the law, as he it heard before. "Thus it appears to me, young men of good family, as I have witnessed a similar sign of the former Tathagatas," in his former life, "the Arhats, the perfectly enlightened," who have perfect wisdom, perfect enlightenment, "murogi". They have no desire or attachment to anything. "Those former Tathagatas, the Arhats,

the perfectly enlightened, they too emitted a lustrous ray, and I am convinced that the Tathagata is about to deliver a grand discourse for the teaching of the law and make his grand speech on the law everywhere heard, he having shown such a foretoken. And because the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly enlightened one wishes that this Dharmaparyaya meeting opposition in all the world...." Dr. Watanabe says "meeting" is not appropriate, but "teaching" or "learning". And because he translates it as "meeting", he says "opposition". But it should be some teaching or learning which is difficult. So, "And because the Tathagata, the Arhat, the perfectly enlightened one wishes that this Dharmaparyaya hard to learn in all the world be heard everywhere, therefore does he display so great a miracle and this foretoken consisting in the lustre occasioned by the emission of a ray.

"I remember, young men of good family, that in the days of yore, many immeasurable, inconceivable, immense, infinite, countless Aeons, more than countless Aeons ago, nay, long and very long before, there was born a Tathagata called Kandrasuryapradipa, an Arhat, a perfectly enlightened one, endowed with science and conduct, a Sugata, knower of the world, an incomparable tamer of men, a teacher (and ruler) of gods and men, a Buddha and Lord." Those are Buddha's ten names, ten titles. Shakyamuni Buddha's ten titles also apply for this Buddha Kandrasuryapradipa. "Kandra" means the moon, "Surya" is sun: "Burning Sun-Moon Buddha".

The ten titles: *Tathagata* [*nyora*] means a man who comes from the truth and who does not stay in any realm of form or form world, who comes from truth and who goes back to the truth, or someone who preaches right Dharma and right law, or someone who observes things as it is. *Arhat* [*arakan*] is one who has attained perfect enlightenment, the attainment of the Theravada Buddhist. *Samyaksambuddha* [*shohenchi*] is Buddha who knows everything and who knows things as it is, who has no discrepancy or one-sided understanding or observation.

Vidyacaranasampanna [*myogyo-soku*] is one who can see through things, who knows his former life, and who has perfect enlightenment. This is also an attainment of the Arhat. In the morning we pray to have three wisdoms or powers, the Arhat's power. Nowadays we have science instead of those three powers, so maybe that is why he translated it as "science". *Myogyo-soku* or "conduct" means precept observation; his mouth and body and mind are perfectly enlightened. *Sugata* [*zenzei*] means a man who has great knowledge, can say things nicely, and who has deep, great *samadhi*. The sixth one, *lokavit* [*sekenge*], one who knows this world [*lokadhatu*] completely, who understands human life completely from both sides, the mundane way and the enlightened way. *Annutara*, [*mujoshi*] is the so-called incomparable one, who has supreme Nirvana. As his attainment is supreme, he is the supreme, incomparable one. "Tamer of men," *purusadamyasarathi* [*jogo-jobu*], who has great means of helping people with great mercy. *Shasta devamanusyanam* [*tenninsi*, "teacher"] of human beings and celestial beings. And the last one is Buddha and Lord, *lakanatha* or *Buddha-bhagavat*. Those are the ten names.

"He showed the law; he revealed the duteous course which is holy at its commencement, holy in its middle, holy at the end, good in substance and form, complete and perfect, correct and pure." This should also be counted as ten elements of the quality of the teaching, but it is very difficult to figure out with this translation. "Holy at its commencement, holy in its middle, holy at the end" is a rather stock term for us. "*Sho chu*

go zen" [?], we say. "Good in substance" should be good in meaning or contents, "form" should be "words". Good in meaning and good in words. "Complete" and "perfect" should be two elements. Complete doesn't include any other meaning; in this sense, it is complete. It also means pureness of the elements of the teaching. "Perfect" here means sufficient. One teaching suffices for every teaching. In this sense it is perfect. "Correct" is one element and "pure" is another. "Correct" means nothing is wrong with it, and "pure" means pureness of practice, or precepts observation.

"That is to say, to the disciples he preached,"--"he" means Kandrasyurapradipa--"the law containing the four Noble Truths, and starting from the chain of causes and effects, tending to overcome birth, decrepitude, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, woe, grief, despondency, and finally leading to Nirvana." The first one is, as you know, the four noble truths for the Theravada Buddhists or *sravakas*. And the teaching of causality or interdependency of birth, old age, "sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, woe, grief, despondency, and finally leading to Nirvana" is the teaching of the *pratyeka-yana*. Here, as you heard, there is no distinction between the teaching for the *sravakas* and the teaching for the *pratekas*. From the viewpoint of the *Lotus Sutra*, which is a Mahayana teaching....

Oh, I'm sorry. Maybe it is too tedious for you. (lots of laughter in this paragraph) I almost gave up already, so I can imagine how you feel. When I was young, I would go to school by train. As long as the train was going, I was sleeping, but when the train stopped, I woke up. I woke up suddenly because I had to get off. As long as my tedious lecture is going, you may sleep. If I stop my lecture, you should wake up. There will be no need to remember these things, you know. But you should know how complicated our Dharma is. Very complicated, but very clear, you know. But to make it clear, we have to make a good effort. Sometimes it looks like some story, and you may think if you read those scriptures, that there's no truth in them, that they are just fairy tales or stories, but it is not so. The underlying thought is very deep and accurate. So as long as we are studying it, we should make it clear.

Those teachings starting from birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, woe, grief, uneasiness and Nirvana are the teaching of interdependency. Most scholars used to understand this as a teaching of causality: birth is the cause of old age, and birth is the cause of sickness. Because we were born, we have old age and sickness and death. But this is actually the teaching of interdependency and is another form of the four noble truths.

We say the Four Noble Truths and Eight-fold Path are teachings for the *sravakas*, and the Twelve Links of Causality is a teaching for *pratyekas*, but according to recent results of scholarship, Buddha actually taught both of those teachings without separating them: sometimes the Four Noble Truths and the holy Eight-fold Path, sometimes the Twelve Links of Causality. And if you analyze those two teachings, they are two different versions of the same teaching. What he meant was the same. So it is no wonder that in this *Lotus Sutra* those two teachings are mixed and are supposed to be for the disciples. Here it says "disciples", but the Chinese rendering says "the disciples of words [or disciples of the worlds?]". It looks like *sravakas*, but it may be better to say "to the disciples of words". Then the meaning becomes clearer. It is said that the original text says "disciples of words", and it includes both *sravakas* and *pratyeka* buddhas.

"...and to the Bodhisattvas he preached the law connected with the six Perfections, and terminating in the knowledge of the Omniscient, after the attainment of supreme, perfect enlightenment." So far the teaching was for *sravakas* and *pratyekas*, and now the teaching is for the bodhisattvas. For the bodhisattva, Buddha gave the teaching of the six *paramitas*. I think I explained them already. *Dana Paramita*, bestowing of material and teaching; *Sila Paramita*, keeping the precepts; *Ksanti Paramita*, the practice of patience; *Virya Paramita*, zeal and progress (*shoji* [?] *paramita*); *Dhyana Paramita*, the practice of meditation; and *Prajna Paramita*, wisdom *paramita*, the power to discern truth or reality.

Thank you very much.

Transcribed and edited by by Brian Fikes.

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Lotus Sutra No. 4

February 1968

Zen Mountain Center

(First half of transcription checked and edited by Brian Fikes)

"Now, young men of good family, long before the time of that Tathagata Kandra-suryapradipa, the Arhat, perfectly enlightened one, there had appeared a Tathagata, perfectly enlightened one, likewise called Kandra-suryapradipa, after whom, O Ajita, there were twenty thousand Tthagatas, perfectly enlightened, all of them bearing the name of Kandra-suryapradipa, of the same lineage and family name, to wit, of Bhara-dvaga. All those twenty thousand Tthagatas, O Agita, from the first to the last, showed the law, revealed the course which is holy at its commencement, holy in its middle, holy at the end."

This teaching wasn't new. Even before Buddha started to tell the *Lotus Sutra*, Kandra-suryapradipa appeared and told the same teaching. And one after another, Kandra-suryapradipa Buddhas appeared in the same name and left the same teaching. That is what Manjusri saw, actually, in his previous life. This is your homework. What does it mean? You may wonder if this is just a fairy tale or if it means something. This is, I think, good homework for you. And if you want to ask this on the final day of the training period, during question and answer, you can ask me. Be careful not to get a big slap, okay? What does it mean? One after another, Buddhas appeared in the same name, Kandra-suryapradipa, and told the same *Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra*.

"The aforesaid Lord Kandra-suryapradipa, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one, when a young prince and not yet having left home (to embrace the ascetic life), had eight sons, viz. the young princes Sumati, Anantamati, Ratnamati, Viseshamati, Vimatisamudghatin, Ghoshamati, and Dharmamati. These eight young princes, Ajita, sons to the Lord Kandra-suryapradipa, the Tathagata, had an immense fortune. Each of them was in possession of four great continents, where they exercised the kingly sway. When they saw that the Lord had left his home to become an ascetic, and heard that he had attained supreme, perfect enlightenment, they forsook all of them the pleasures of royalty and followed the example of the Lord by resigning the world; all of them

strove to reach superior enlightenment and became preachers of the law. While constantly leading a holy life, those young princes planted roots of goodness under many thousands of Buddhas."

Kandrasuryapradipa Bodhisattva, when he was at home, before he became an ascetic, had eight sons. When they heard that their father attained enlightenment and was giving the supreme teaching, they followed their father's way. They also attained enlightenment and gave the supreme teaching.

The next part is exactly the same as page 6, second paragraph, except the name is different. So it may not be necessary to read it, but:

"It was at that time, Ajita, that the Lord, Kandrasuryapradipa, the Tathagata, perfectly enlightened one, after expounding the Dharmaparyaya called 'the Great Exposition,' a text of great extension, serving to instruct Bodhisattvas and proper to all Buddhas, at the same moment and instant, at the same gathering of the classes of hearers, sat cross-legged on the same seat of the law, and entered upon the meditation termed 'the Station of the exposition of Infinity;' his body was motionless, and his mind had reached perfect tranquility. And as soon as the Lord had entered upon the meditation, there fell a great rain of divine flowers, Mandaravas and great Mandaravas, Manjushakas and great Manjushakas, covering the Lord and the four classes of hearers, while the whole Buddha-field shook in six ways; it moved, removed, trembled, trembled from one end to the other, tossed, tossed along.

"Then did those who were assembled and sitting together at that congregation, monks, nuns, male and female lay devotees, gods, Nagas, goblins, Gandharvas, demons, Garudas, Kinnaras, great serpents, men and beings not human, as well as governors of a region, rulers of armies and rulers of four continents, all of them with their followers gaze on the Lord in astonishment, in amazement, in ecstasy.

"And at that moment there issued a ray from within the circle of hair between the eyebrows of the Lord. It extended over eighteen hundred thousand Buddha-fields in the eastern quarter, so that all those Buddha-fields appeared wholly illuminated by its radiance, just like the Buddha-fields do now, O Ajita."

The same thing happened then as is happening now, O Ajita, he says.

"At that juncture, Ajita, there were twenty kotis of Bodhisattvas following the Lord. All hearers of the law in that assembly, on seeing how the world was illuminated by the lustre of that ray, felt astonishment, amazement, ecstasy, and curiosity.

"Now it happened, Ajita, that under the rule of the aforesaid Lord there was a Bodhisattva called Varaprabha, who had eight hundred pupils. It was to this Bodhisattva Varaprabha that the Lord, on rising from his meditation, revealed the Dharmaparyaya called 'the Lotus of the True Law.'"

Here at last appears the name of the Sutra.

"He spoke during fully sixty intermediate kalpas, always sitting on the same seat with the immovable body and tranquil mind. And the whole assembly continued sitting on the same seats, listening to the preaching of the Lord for sixty intermediate kalpas, there being not a single creature in that assembly who felt fatigue of body or mind."

A great difference from my lecture! What does it mean, by the way? Do you understand what it means?

"As the Lord Kandrasuryapradipa, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one, during sixty intermediate kalpas had been expounding the Dharmaparyaya called 'the Lotus of

the True Law', a text of great development, serving to instruct Bodhisattvas and proper to all Buddhas, he instantly announced his complete Nirvana to the world, including the gods, Maras and Brahmas, to all creatures, including ascetics, Brahmans, gods, men and demons, saying: Today, O monks, this very night, in the middle watch, will the Tathagata, by entering the element of absolute nirvana, become wholly extinct."

After Kanrasuryapradipa gave out this Lotus Sutra, he announced his Nirvana. Before he took Nirvana, he appointed his successor.

"Thereupon, Ajita, the Lord Kandrasuryapradipa, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one, predestinated the Bodhisattva called Srigarbha to supreme, perfect enlightenment, and then spoke thus to the whole assembly: O monks, this Bodhisattva Srigarbha here shall immediately after me attain supreme, perfect enlightenment, and become Vimalanetra, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one."

So he appointed Srigarbha Bodhisattva to be his successor, and said his name should be Vimalanetra. To assure someone's enlightenment in the future like this is called *juki* in Japanese. In the *Shobogenzo* there is a fascicle called *Juki*, where Dogen explains in his own way what *juki* is. He also gives his interpretation of this sutra in another chapter called *Turn the Lotus Sutra*. *Juki* in Sanskrit is *vyakarana*. *Vy* and *a* are prefixes, and *kar* means to divide. If there was a question and answer part of a scripture, this part was called *vyacarana*. Later it meant to give some title to a disciple, tell when he would attain enlightenment, or tell where he would be born after this life. Especially this kind of description is called *juki* or *vyakarana*. Here Buddha gave Srigarbha Bodhisattva the name of Vimalanetra and said he will attain enlightenment and will be his successor.

And here it says this sutra was continued by Kandrasuryapradipa for sixty intermediate *kalpas* of time. An intermediate *kalpa* is a unit of time, actually. There are many ways of explaining how long one *kalpa* is. It is so long that no one knows. Buddhists think that in the past human beings lived to a limitless age. We didn't die at ninety or one hundred; we had limitless age. But we became busier and busier in this life, and our life became shorter and shorter, until the average life became ten years. That took one *kalpa*. So we don't know how long it is. Since human life was limitless, this is an almost limitless unit of time. And after our lifespan comes to ten years, it will increase little by little. We will be around. There will be no human nature when that happens to us. We will think more and improve our way of life. By this kind of effort, our lifespan will be extended more and more until it reaches eighty-thousand years. When it reaches eighty-thousand years, as we are human beings, we will become lazier and lazier, inventing airplanes and mechanical things. And we will lose our life, our lifespan will become shorter and shorter until it comes to ten years. This is also one *kalpa*. The first *kalpa* of this cycle is the time it takes our life spans to change from limitless to ten years. We will repeat the same increasing and decreasing of our lifespan over and over, eighteen times.

The last *kalpa* will be when everything will go, including human life. *Juko* is the name for the *kalpas* when everything existed pretty firmly, without losing its form, and *eko* [*samvarta-kalpa*] means the time at the end of *juko* when everything will disintegrate. Integrated age and disintegrated age. An integrated age is twenty *kalpas* long, and one *kalpa* is our lifespan going up and down, from ten to eighty-thousand.

Student 1: Will there still be Buddha after the disintegration?

S.R.: There is a koan which is exactly the same as your question.

Student 1: What is the answer to the koan?

S.R.: That is also a koan, so this is your homework. Interesting question.

Student 2: I didn't understand. I thought you just said that they can go eighteen times up and down from ten to eighty thousand, which is eighteen *kalpas*, and then there's disintegration and the whole thing's over. So how can they talk about twenty intermediate *kalpas* or other numbers of *kalpas* they give as examples which go way over eighteen?

S.R.: It is explained as just eighteen *kalpas*. A *kalpa* is already innumerable, but even so it means some length of time. Eighteen or twenty of those lengths of time is a *juko*, or integrated *kalpa*.

Student 3: The footnote [see below] said that a *kalpa* was half an hour. [There was lots of laughter during this section.]

S.R.: No, no.

Student 3: In the book it says so.

S.R.: It doesn't say so. It is....

Student 3: It says in Sanskrit a lot of intermediate *kalpas*, and it says in the footnote that it's an afternoon.

S.R.: No, I don't think so. Where is it?

Student 4: It's just the translator. He's not a Buddhist.

S.R.: No, no, no, he is.... I don't know where it is, but....

Student 5: I think there was a piece of symbolism, on....

[Footnote #5 on p. xxvi of Kern's *Saddharma-Pundarika* says: "One intermediate kalpa is, in the system, equal to 8 *yugas*. As 4 *yugas* number 4,320,000 years, it follows that the pause (of 50 intermediate *kalpas*) lasted 432 millions of years. Esoterically, *kalpa* has certainly denoted a short interval of time, but even if we take the 'intermediate *kalpa*' to mean, in reality a lapse of time equal to a few hours the pause would not refer to an historical event.]

S.R.: And this is just one of many ideas of *kalpas*. Did I explain another way of understanding one *kalpa*? There is a big rock, like Tassajara. And every five hundred years, maybe, or more, an angel comes to the rock, and she makes her sleeve rub off some stone. When that stone has vanished from the angel's sleeve rubbing it, it is one *kalpa*. So there are many ways of explaining what one *kalpa* is.

But here it is specifically an intermediate *kalpa*, so I must follow this idea of intermediate. Maybe what you are saying is immediately, and they repeat the same thing. So that is the explanation to it [the half hour *kalpa*?]. I think I will come to that sentence or clause.

"Thereafter, Ajita, that very night, at that very watch, the Lord Kandrasuryapradipa, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one, became extinct by entering the element of absolute Nirvana. And the aforementioned Dharmaparyaya, termed 'the Lotus of the True Law,' was kept in memory by the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Varaprabha; during eighty intermediate kalpas did the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Varaprabha keep and reveal the commandment of the Lord who had entered Nirvana. Now it so happened, Ajita, that the eight sons of the Lord Kandrasuryapradipa, the Mati and the rest, were pupils to that very Bodhisattva Varaprabha. They were by him made ripe for supreme, perfect enlightenment, and in after times they saw and worshipped many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of Buddhas, all of whom had attained supreme, perfect enlightenment, the last of them being Dipankara, the Tathagata, the perfectly

enlightened one."

Here appears Dipankara. Usually, as you know, Dipankara Bodhisattva is the oldest of all the Bodhisattvas. But according to this sutra, even before Dipankara there were so many Bodhisattvas, like Srigarba, whose enlightened name is Vimalanetra, or like Varaprabha, or Kandrasyapradipa. And what does this mean? Actually, there is no first bodhisattva. Actually, everyone is a bodhisattva. This sutra suggests this kind of teaching.

"Amongst those eight pupils there was one Bodhisattva who attached an extreme value to gain, honour and praise, and was fond of glory, but all the words and letters one taught him faded (from his memory), did not stick. So he got the appellation of Yasaskama. (Desirous of Glory) He had propitiated many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of Buddhas by that root of goodness," -- Even so, he served many buddhas, and planted good roots. -- "...and afterwards esteemed, honoured, respected, revered, venerated, worshipped them. Perhaps, Ajita, thou feelest some doubt, perplexity or misgiving that in those days, at that time, there was another Bodhisattva Mahasattva Varaprabha, preacher of the law. But do not think so. Why? Because it is myself who in those days, at that time, was the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Varaprabha, preacher of the law; and that Bodhisattva named Yasaskama, the lazy one, it is thyself, Ajita,..."

Maitreya was once lazy, you know. He was the bodhisattva named 'Desirous of Glory' or Yasaskama.

"...it is thyself, Ajita, who in those days, at that time, wert the Bodhisattva named Yasaskama, the lazy one. And so, Ajita, having once seen a similar foretoken of the Lord, I infer from a similar ray being emitted just now, that the Lord is about to expound the Dharmaparyaya called 'the Lotus of the True Law.'

"And on that occasion, in order to treat the subject more copiously, Manjusri, the prince royal, uttered the following stanzas:"

Manjusri said the same thing again, except in the form of stanzas or *gathas*. There is some difference between the prose part and the *gatha* part, but they are nearly the same, and there will be no need to repeat it. But I want you to read it. This is also your homework.

I want to point out something important. Several people don't know. In the prose section, on page 22, the last paragraph, it says, "Amongst those eight pupils there was one Bodhisattva who attached an extreme value to gain, honour and praise,..." This part needs some explanation. The Sanskrit word translated as "praise" here is *jnati* [*jnatra?*]. *Jnati* means many things. Sometimes it means to try to be protected by one's kinsmen or family. For instance, a wife and husband are usually very intimate, so they help each other. That is alright, but then sometimes he or she cannot be fair to everyone, and this is not so good. In this way many things will happen. Another interpretation of this word is some talent, or sagacity, or studiousness, or witty-mindedness, or cleverness with the hands, or cleverness in doing things. This also may create some trouble for the community or society. In *gatha* 90 the same thing is repeated, but here it is translated differently: "Among the pupils of Varaprabha, the son of Jina, at the time of his teaching the law, was one slothful, covetous, greedy of gain and cleverness." Here *jnati* is translated as "cleverness", and in the prose part the same word is translated as "praise". If the original word is *jnati*, it means "getting protection

from his kinsmen". The Sanskrit for "cleverness" should be another word. Anyway, both are very subtle points about which we should be very careful. There are similar instances in many scriptures. In the *Dharmapada* it says that, for the fool, cleverness will invite loss, and it will destroy his happiness, or merit, or it will cut off his head. In the explanation in Pali there is a parable. There was a man who was good at hitting something with a stone, and because of this art, he won a big prize. Someone was watching and studied how to do this, but then he was killed by hitting something with a stone. In another sutra it says, "If a clever heretic studies, he will lose his life, but a clever Buddhist will gain from his cleverness." This kind of story is found all over. In the *Shobogenzo*, Dogen Zenji says that whether one is clever or dull doesn't matter. If we practice zazen, we will get the same attainment. This is Buddhist understanding, or a Buddhist idea, of human character. This point should always be remembered, especially by the intelligent ones. When the clever ones do not help others, the Sangha will be destroyed. Only when clever and talented people help others will the Sangha last long. This is our teaching.

Another difference between the prose and *gatha* parts is that in *gatha* #87 it says, "*He had eight hundred pupils, who all of them were by him brought to full development. They saw many kotis of Buddhas, great sages, whom they worshipped.*" In the prose part it says "*eight disciples who were the sons of Kandrasyapradipa.*" It says eight sons, or eight pupils, instead of eight hundred pupils. Scholars say "eight hundred pupils" may be right, and when the prose part was added, it was put in a more interesting way, but no one knows.

Student: Wasn't there something you read in the prose part about a Bodhisattva who had eight hundred pupils?

S.R.: No. You noticed that from a different part: "*Now it happened, Ajita, that under the rule of the aforesaid Lord there was a Bodhisattva called Varaprabha, who had eight hundred pupils. It was to this Bodhisattva Varaprabha that the Lord, on rising from his meditation, revealed the Dharmaparyaya called 'the Lotus of the True Law.'*" What I mean is this part: "*The aforesaid Lord Kandrasyapradipa, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one, when a young prince and not yet having left home, had eight sons, namely, (so and so)...*" This part corresponds to *gatha* #87. The Chinese rendering translated by Kumaragiva says, "*He had eight pupils,*" meaning Vimalanetra, not Kandrasyapradipa. Those eight sons became this bodhisattva's disciples. Do you understand?

Student: Roshi, what is the meaning of their leaving home just because their father became a monk?

S.R.: In India, after their householder's life was finished, they went in the *aranya* or forest and practiced the religious way. That was their custom. Everyone did so.

Student: The sons go too, if their father goes?

S.R.: That was an exception, maybe, like Buddha. When Buddha attained enlightenment, his son and his father and his mother-in-law and aunt, who raised him, joined his order.

Student: I thought it should have a deep meaning. [?]

S.R.: This is figurative, and it is because he was so great; he was an exception. But usually even laymen left their homes and practiced their way in the forest with many people who had finished their household life. That was their custom. They are very

religious people.

I am supposed to finish this lecture by tonight, but maybe there are too many things to say. This is not such an easy study, because it is very complicated. Many scholars are still continuously studying it, and, day by day, the meaning of this sutra becomes clearer and clearer. So it is rather difficult to make it absolutely clear. What I said won't be absolutely right; there must be many mistakes, naturally.

Thank you very much.

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Lotus Sutra #5

February 1968

Zen Mountain Center

(Transcription checked and edited by Brian Fikes)

Manjusri again is answering Maitreya, telling him what he has seen. He is so sure that the Buddha will tell them the *Lotus Sutra*.

"And so, Agita, having once seen a similar fore-token of the Lord, I infer from a similar ray being emitted just now, that the Lord is about to expound the Dharmaparyaya called the Lotus of the True Law."

"And on that occasion, in order to treat the subject more copiously, Manjusri, the prince royal, uttered the following stanzas:"

(Stanza #57:) "I remember a past period, inconceivable, illimited kalpas ago, when the highest of beings, the Jina of the name of Kandrasyurapradipa, was in existence.

"He preached the true law, he, the leader of creatures; he educated an infinite number of kotis of beings, and roused inconceivably many Bodhisattvas to acquiring supreme Buddha-knowledge.

"And the eight sons born to him, the leader, when he was prince royal, no sooner saw that the great sage had embraced ascetic life, than they resigned worldly pleasures and became monks."

All of them, all of his eight sons resigned worldly pleasures and became monks.

"And the Lord of the world proclaimed the law, and revealed to thousands of kotis of living beings the Sutra, the development, which by name is called 'the excellent Exposition of Infinity.'

"Immediately after delivering his speech, the leader crossed his legs and entered upon the meditation of 'the excellent Exposition of the Infinite.' There on his seat of the law the eminent seer continued absorbed in meditation."

He was absorbed in meditation like Shakyamuni Buddha is doing.

"And there fell a celestial rain of Mandaravas, while the drums (of heaven) resounded without being struck; the gods and elves in the sky paid honour to the highest of men.

"And simultaneously all the fields (of Buddha) began trembling. A wonder it was, a great prodigy. Then the chief emitted from between his brows one extremely beautiful ray,

"Which moving to the eastern quarter glittered, illuminating the world all over the extent

of eighteen thousand fields. It manifested the vanishing and appearing beings.

"Some of the fields then seemed jewelled, others showed the hue of lapis lazuli, all splendid, extremely beautiful, owing to the radiance of the ray from the leader.

"Gods and men, as well as Nagas, goblins, Gandharvas, nymphs, Kinnaras, and those occupied with serving the Sugata became visible in the spheres and paid their devotion.

"The Buddhas also, those self-born beings, appeared of their own accord, resembling golden columns; like unto a golden disk (within lapis lazuli), they revealed the law in the midst of the assembly.

"The disciples, indeed, are not to be counted: the disciples of Sugatas are numberless. Yet the lustre of the ray renders them all visible in every field.

"Energetic, without breach or flaw in their course, similar to gems and jewels, the sons of the leaders of men are visible in the mountain caves where they are dwelling. Numerous Bodhisattvas, like the sand of the Ganges, who are spending all their wealth in giving alms, who have the strength of patience, are devoted to contemplation and wise, become all of them visible by that ray.

"Immovable, unshaken, firm in patience, devoted to contemplation, and absorbed in meditation are seen the true sons of the Sugatas while they are striving for supreme enlightenment by dint of meditation.

"They preach the law in many spheres, and point to the true, quiet spotless state they know. Such is the effect produced by the power of the Sugata.

"And all the four classes of hearers on seeing the power of the mighty Kandrakadipa were filled with joy and asked one another: How is this?

"And soon afterwards, as the Leader of the world, worshipped by men, gods, and goblins, rose from his meditation, he addressed his son Varaprabha, the wise Bodhisattva and preacher of the law:" And he aroused himself from meditation.

"Thou art wise, the eye and refuge of the world; thou art the trustworthy keeper of my law, and canst bear witness as to the treasure of laws which I am to lay bare to the weal of living beings.'

"Then, after rousing and stimulating, praising and lauding many Bodhisattvas, did the Jina proclaim the supreme laws during fully sixty intermediate kalpas."

Now Kandrakadipa is starting to give the Lotus Sutra.

"And whatever excellent supreme law was proclaimed by the Lord of the world while continuing sitting on the very same seat, was kept in memory by Baraprabha, the son of Jina, the preacher of the law."

He was the one who told this Lotus Sutra.

"And after the Jina and Leader had manifested the supreme law and stimulated the numerous crowd, he spoke, that day, towards the world including the gods (as follows):

"I have manifested the rule of the law; I have shown the nature of the law; now, O monks, it is the time of my Nirvana; this very night, in the middle watch.

"Be zealous and strong in persuasion; apply yourselves to my lessons; (for) the Jinas, the great seers, are but rarely met with in the lapse of myriads of kotis of Aeons.'

"The many sons of Buddha were struck with grief and filled with extreme sorrow when they heard the voice of the highest of men announcing that his Nirvana was near at hand.

"To comfort so inconceivably many kotis of living beings the king of kings said: 'Be not

afraid, O monks; after my Nirvana there shall be another Buddha.

"The wise Bodhisattva Srigarbha, after finishing his course in faultless knowledge, shall reach highest, supreme enlightenment, and become a Jina under the name of Vimalagrāneta."

"That very night, in the middle watch, he met complete extinction, like a lamp when the cause (of its burning) is exhausted. His relics were distributed, and of his Stupas there was an infinite number of myriads of kotis."

There is, you know, a similar story in China. When a Zen Master Nangyo Ejo passed away, the Emperor asked him, "What should we do about your relics? Is there anything we can do to help you? What do you want me to do?" And Ejo said, "If you build me a mound for my relics, it is enough." "How should I build it?" the Emperor asked. Ejo said, "My disciple will know it well, so ask him." So after he passed away, the Emperor asked his disciple how to make the mound. The disciple said, "Make the best mound." "How do you make the best mound?" The disciple said, "From the east side of the Yangtse to the west side of the Yangtse River." And the Emperor couldn't understand. It would cover the whole country! So he couldn't answer, he couldn't say yes. Ejo's true body covers everything, you know. He is one with everything, so even though he dies, there is no difference.

"The monks and nuns at the time being, who strove after supreme, highest enlightenment, numerous as sand of the Ganges, applied themselves to the commandment of the Sugata."

The *Lotus Sutra* should not be understood literally. What it describes is how things exist, animate and inanimate beings, human and non-human beings, from the lowest being of the six worlds to the highest being of Buddha. You know the six worlds. Among the six worlds, the celestial world is the highest, next is the human world, and the hell world and hungry ghost world are the lowest. Above the celestial world are *śravakas*, *pratyekas*, bodhisattvas, and buddhas. Buddha is the highest. This sutra includes all of those beings. We describe reality in terms of those beings, but that is not enough. We should understand in that way. If so, the *Lotus Sutra* is not the only valuable sutra, or the highest sutra. All the sutras are very valuable. There may be sutras not yet described by anyone.

So, as Dogen Zenji said, even the sound of the bell and the color of the mountain are bodhisattvas--they all can teach. Actually, he means that all we see teaches the *Lotus Sutra*. That is how we Zen Buddhists understand this sutra. Zen Buddhism, especially Dogen's Zen, actually arose from the Tendai school and teaching. But the difference is that the other school treats this sutra as the king of sutras, the highest sutra, but we do not. We think this is one of the important sutras, but all of the sutras are important. When we understand everything, everything will be important. This is the difference between our understanding of the *Lotus Sutra* and the understanding of other schools. And, according to Dogen, whether or not we attain enlightenment, we are actually fluently speaking about the truth.

Here it says, *daiichigi[-tai]*, "the First Principle". What does it mean? The first Principle is the reality, the absolute, which cannot be conveyed in terms of good or bad, supreme or common. It is the principle that everything is revealed through everything, revealing itself and fluently speaking about the First Principle. So he understood enlightenment in this way. But it does not mean that there is no need to attain enlightenment. If you

understand in that way, it is already the Second Principle, not the First Principle. If it is necessary or not necessary, this is the Second Principle. So if it is necessary to say something, you must say, "Sometimes necessary, sometimes not necessary." Whatever you say, that is right. That is more like Dogen Zenji's understanding. The other day, in the fireplace room, Lama Govinda talked about the Shingon understanding, the so-called "Tantric" understanding --not the physical Tantric, but the original Tantric, esoteric teaching of Buddhism. The reason we say "esoteric" is that true teaching is beyond understanding. Esoteric means you can't see or hear it. When you cannot see or understand it, you may say that is mystery or mystical. But that is not true understanding. There may be two kinds of things you cannot understand. One is something mystical --just because you cannot see or cannot understand it. But there is another thing which you cannot understand. It is too obvious. The reality is too real to speak about. We say, "If you want to explain what water is, give him water, don't speak about it. Even though you speak about it, it is not possible to explain what water is." That kind of true experience, or reality, is not possible to talk about. In this sense, there is esoteric teaching.

Tantric or Shingon Buddhism emphasizes this point. Their basic scripture is the *Diamond Sutra*, which was told by Buddha, but not by the historical Buddha. Buddha didn't speak this sutra with his mouth. He didn't tell it for an audience, but for himself. This means that we should not read that scripture with our mind. That is why they explain the sutra with various *mudras*. The Zen understanding is very similar to this, but Zen does not depend on any sutra, because everything is a sutra. But the Shingon school chooses one scripture. They say this sutra was told by the Bodhisattva Dainichinyorai [Mahavairocana-tathagata].

We say *kenzoku* [?], which means "like his hands or legs or ears". He told it to himself. *Kenzoku* means "his name", actually. But when they say Dainichinyorai's name, it means his *mandala*. The whole *mandala* of Dainichinyorai is his body. There are many buddhas in the *mandala*, and all of them are a part of his body. Dainichinyorai is telling the truth to himself, to those buddhas in the *mandala*. Since they are a part of himself, he is not giving some special teaching to anyone else. Do you understand? It is like the universe is telling the truth to the universe, the whole cosmic being is telling the truth to the cosmic being. So whatever is going on in the cosmos is the teaching itself. When we understand their teaching in this way, it is very close to Zen.

In the *Shobogenzo* we have the fascicle called *Hokke Ten Hokke*, which means "Turning the *Lotus Sutra*". The title of this fascicle came from the Sixth Patriarch. I think you know that. Once the Sixth Patriarch was giving Dharma to people, and a bold disciple, a very arrogant fellow, appeared in front of him. But he couldn't bow to the floor, he failed to lower his head to the floor. So the Sixth Patriarch said, "Why are you so arrogant? Why do you bow in that way?" And the monk said, "I am very sorry." "If you say so, it is alright. But if you fail to lower your head to the floor, you must have something in your mind. What do you have in your mind?" The boy said, "The *Lotus Sutra*. I am reading it every day, and I must have read it maybe thousands of times." "Even though you are reading the *Lotus Sutra*, you don't understand what it means," the Sixth Patriarch said. "What is the true meaning of the *Lotus Sutra*" the boy asked him. And he said, "I will explain it to you, but I cannot read it, so please read it to me." So the boy started to read it, and the Sixth Patriarch said, "If your mind is deluded, you

will be turned by the *Lotus Sutra*. If you are enlightened, you will turn it."

Dogen Zenji, referring to this story, said to be turned by the sutra, or to turn the sutra, or to be deluded or to be enlightened, are all the First Principle. The *Lotus Sutra* says there is no difference. That is Dogen Zenji's understanding. What the Sixth Patriarch meant is not different from Dogen Zenji's understanding, but Dogen Zenji made what the Sixth Patriarch said clearer. To be turned by the *Lotus Sutra* means to read it literally, or in an intellectual or dualistic way: "I read the *Lotus Sutra*." To turn it means the *Lotus Sutra* turns the *Lotus Sutra*, like the Shingon understanding of the Bodhisattva or Tathagata of the *Diamond Sutra* giving the teaching to himself. That is how we turn the *Lotus Sutra*.

So there is no difference. If you are enlightened, you are one with the whole universe, and the whole universe is telling the truth to the whole universe, to everything, or the whole universe is revealing itself through every being. What is happening is the activity of big, One Being, which is called Buddha. This is how we should understand the *Lotus Sutra*.

In short, if we explain Buddhism or Zen Buddhism in this way, that whatever we are doing is a part of that activity, what we are discussing may seem too big, and seem to have nothing to do with our everyday life. But this is not just our understanding. We say, "When we talk about the greatness of the teaching, it will be as great as the universe. But when we talk about it on a small scale, it will penetrate the smallest particle of being imaginable."

That is why you may think our way is too careful and particular. We say, "Don't place something that way," or, "You should put something which belongs in a higher place in a higher place, and something which belongs in a lower place in a lower place. Don't mix them up." Our way is very careful in this respect. So our teaching is limitless in both ways. Our teaching is on a great scale, and, at the same time, it is very particular on a small scale. This is the nature of our world.

As you know, I like stones very much, but especially big ones. Someone came to me the other day with a magnifying glass and said, "Look at those stones." So I looked at them one by one. But to my great astonishment, those small stones were exactly the same as big ones! They were as interesting as big ones, the shapes were different, and some had very good shapes. You could make a beautiful garden with those stones. I was very pleased. I thought, this is what the universe consists of and how everything is going. So, if you cannot accomplish something great, you can work on a very small thing, in a very small scale, and the meaning is not any different at all. This is the nature of our practice and teaching.

So those teachings were not started by Buddha. Before Buddha there must have been many many Buddhas, limitless, numerous Buddhas. There *must* have been, in this way this sutra describes reality.

Thank you very much.

Transcribed and edited by by Brian Fikes.

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Lotus Sutra No. 6

February 1968

Zen Mountain Center

(Transcription checked and edited by Brian Fikes)

"The monks and nuns at the time being, who strove after supreme, highest enlightenment, numerous as sand of the Ganges, applied themselves to the commandment of the Sugata.

"And the monk who then was the preacher of the law and the keeper of the law, Varaprabha, expounded for fully eighty intermediate kalpas the highest laws according to the commandment (of the Sugata)."

In other words, Buddha's teaching is eternal truth, beginningless and endless. And the Bodhisattva Varaprabha expounded it for fully eighty intermediate *kalpas*, in other words, for a limitlessly long time.

"He had eight hundred pupils, who all of them were by him brought to full development. They saw many kotis of Buddhas, great sages, whom they worshipped."

"He had eight hundred pupils." This is different from the prose part, which says:

"Now it so happened, Ajita, that the eight sons of the Lord Kandra suryapradipa, Mati and the rest, were pupils to that very Bodhisattva Varaprabha. They were by him made ripe for supreme, perfect enlightenment, and in after times they saw and worshipped many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of Buddhas, all of whom had attained supreme, perfect enlightenment, the last of them being Dipankara, the Tathagata, the perfectly enlightened one."

Gatha 88: *"By following the regular course they became Buddhas in several spheres, and as they followed one another in immediate succession they successively foretold each other's future destiny to Buddhahood."*

"The last of these Buddhas following one another was Dipankara. He, the supreme god of gods, honoured by crowds of sages, educated thousands of kotis of living beings."

Dipankara Buddha is supposed to be the Buddha who gave *juki* to Shakyamuni Buddha. I explained *juki* already [see previous lecture]. In Sanskrit it is *vyakarana*, to tell one's future attainment. "You will be born in such and such a place, and will attain enlightenment, and your name will be such and such." This is *juki*.

Shakyamuni Buddha in his former life studied under this Dipankara Bodhisattva. When this bodhisattva came to a muddy place, Shakyamuni Buddha spread many things over the mud. But the mud was so wide that the rugs he gathered could not cover it, so he spread his hair over the muddy place and let Dipankara Bodhisattva pass over the muddy place. This is why we bow, you know, with the feeling of Buddha's feet on our hands three times. This is the Buddha.

Another story is also told. Dipankara Buddha is the Buddha who gave *juki* to Buddha and may be the last buddha Shakyamuni Buddha served. In ancient times there were great kings whose ministers were very wise. One minister was so wise that his king gave him half of the whole world, which he ruled. And he had a bright boy whom he sent to his brother, who was a great scholar. He studied under him and became a great teacher or bodhisattva. His father was very proud of him and brought him to his home and listened to his sermon. Then he brought him to his former king at the border between their two countries, and the son gave the king a great sermon. After that, for

many hundreds of *kotis* of *kalpas* of time, the king sent various offerings to that teacher. Later that teacher became Dipankara Bodhisattva, and that king who helped him was the Buddha himself. So when Dipankara Bodhisattva became enlightened and became a true teacher of the whole world, Buddha became his disciple, studied, and received his *juki* from him.

All of those stories are about the eternal teaching which is always with every being, from beginningless beginning to endless end. That is what they mean.

"Among the pupils of Varaprabha, the son of Jina, at the time of his teaching the law, was one slothful, covetous, greedy of gain and cleverness."

I explained this already. Here it says "cleverness", but the prose part says "praise". And the original words may not be the same. According to the result of the studies of many scholars, this sutra was held in India by some group like Zen Center. Zen Center had a special scripture, which was called the *Lotus Sutra*. And we had many branches. At Tassajara we made a translation, and at San Francisco and Los Altos and Berkeley they made translations. At Tassajara we might change our version, so originally the scriptures they used were not the same. That is why we have so many original texts and so many kinds of translations. And various people from various countries translated the texts, so naturally there must be many kinds of translations. It is quite natural.

Student: The Chinese and Japanese translations are not identical word for word. Isn't that just because the symbolism is different?

S.R.: The words are also nearly the same, not so different.

Student: This translation here tries to make it word for word. It's difficult, but the British scholar who translated it didn't try to change the symbolism to fit British symbolism. I was wondering if they changed the words to fit the Japanese symbolism.

S.R.: No, they don't. They try to be faithful to the original words, word for word, when they translate. They say Kumaragiva's translation is not very literal, but you may say even his is a very literal translation. If they had the original text, the Chinese and the Tibetan and the Nepalese scholars were very faithful to the translation, word by word. And they discussed the words: "This word should be translated as this word. No, that word." This kind of discussion is still going on so that we will be faithful to the original.

Student: And Dogen did this too?

S.R.: Dogen Zenji did not translate, he commented. He expressed his way of understanding this sutra. Almost every time he wrote something he referred to this sutra. At least two fascicles of the *Shobogenzo*, "*Juki*" and "*Hokke Ten Hokke*", are his own special understanding of this sutra. "We should understand the sutra this way," he said. Kumaragiva's contribution was, for instance, that he sometimes put two *gathas* together so that they could be understood better. As you must have seen, [in the Sanskrit,] one long sentence was sometimes divided into two to put them into the gatha style. But Kumaragiva put more emphasis on the meaning of the sutra; so for the Chinese people, Kumaragiva's translation was easy to understand. That was a big reason why this sutra was appreciated so much by the Chinese people.

"He was also excessively desirous of glory, but very fickle, so that the lessons dictated to him and his own reading faded from his memory as soon as learnt."

I explained this already. Dogen Zenji was very faithful to this sutra and very impressed by those gathas. He was very strict about Buddhists having worldly desires. As a Buddhist we should not have even the desire to expect enlightenment. You may say

that was a strict observation of this sutra. Of course, that was his character. His character was so pure and lofty. And he didn't care about anything but truth. He would give his whole body and mind to the truth. That was his way.

"His name was Yasaskama, by which he was known everywhere." "Yasaskama" means "desirous of glory".

"By the accumulated merit of that good action, spotted as it was,"--

he helped people very much, so with this merit he attained enlightenment--"he propitiated thousands of kotis of Buddhas, whom he rendered ample honour. He went through the regular course of duties and saw the present Buddha Sakyasimha.

"He shall be the last to reach superior enlightenment and become a Lord known by the family name of Maitreya, who shall educate thousands of kotis of creatures."

Maitreya was actually a historical character and a disciple of Buddha. Many stories are told about him. You know, Buddha's aunt who raised him when he was young, gave a *kesa* of gold embroidery to him.

[A portion of the tape is completely or nearly silent here, where he tells the story of the gold *kesa*.]

Student 1: Who wore it?

Student 2: Tell us where.

S.R.: No one wore the gold embroidered *kesa* except Jita Maitreya, who was supposed to be the last disciple to attain enlightenment. He was something like this bodhisattva in his former life. He was called "desirous of glory". And Buddha was very glad that he wore the *kesa*, but maybe because of that, he received that kind of *juki*, that he would be the last buddha.

This is interesting, you know. Buddha was glad that he was not so good. If I were Shakyamuni Buddha, I would have been very angry, maybe. I would not be happy to see that one of the disciples was not so good, treading the wrong path. But Buddha was very patient, and he was very glad. He thought, "eventually he will attain enlightenment."

I think this is why Dogen Zenji says all of us will eventually attain enlightenment. It is no use expecting attainment. Sooner or later everyone will attain enlightenment because we have Buddha nature. As a buddhist, we must have this kind of big mind and big scale of practice. It is not a matter of today or tomorrow, or this year or next year.

"He who then, under the rule of the extinct Sugata, was so slothful, was thyself, and it was I who then was the preacher of the law."

Manjusri was the preacher, and the slothful one was Maitreya.

"As on seeing a foretoken of this kind I recognize a sign such as I have seen manifested of yore," (some translations have "at that place manifested of yore")

"therefore and on that account I know," "That decidedly the chief of Jinas, the supreme king of the Sakyas, the All-seeing, who knows the highest truth, is about to pronounce the excellent Sutra which I have heard before."

He will proclaim the same sutra. The highest truth is *daiji*, translated as *dai jiki* in Chinese scriptures. This is the subject of the question the emperor asked Bodhidharma: "What is the First Principle?" Bodhidharma said, "I don't know." "I don't know" is the First Principle. Do you understand? The first Principle cannot be known in terms of

good or bad, right or wrong, because it is both right and wrong.

"That very sign displayed at present is a proof of the skillfulness of the leaders; the Lion of the Sakyas is to make an exhortation, to declare the fixed nature of the law."

"Fixed nature" means the true nature or ultimate nature of the law.

"Be well prepared and well minded; join your hands: he who is affectionate and merciful to the world is going to speak, is going to pour the endless rain of the law and refresh those that are waiting for enlightenment."

"And if some should feel doubt, uncertainty, or misgiving in any respect, then the Wise One shall remove it for his children, the Bodhisattvas here striving after enlightenment."

This is the last *gatha* of the first chapter. I think you must have understood the nature of our teaching. This is the Oriental tree, you know. It is rather difficult for you to figure out which way its root is going. If you know which way the root of Buddhism is going, it may be easier to understand how the trunk of the tree of Buddhism is supported by the root. There is a characteristic in the way we make our effort. The direction in which we make our effort might be very interesting for you to know. If our human effort is pointed in the same direction by all human beings, that is a dreadful destiny. Everyone should strive in his own way, and everyone should find out his own way to develop himself. Even though each one of us is making a different effort, as long as we have Buddha Nature, as long as all the effort is supported by Buddha Nature, there is no problem. When we don't know that everyone's effort is supported by the same ground and are attached to our own way, rejecting or ignoring the others' ways and insisting on our own way, that is confusion. So we Buddhists put emphasis on each one's own way. This sutra, especially, puts emphasis on each one's own way, and on the meaning of each one's own being. At the same time, as you must have understood already, this sutra provides every one of us with a big, common ground where we can enjoy each one's own way. This is possible if you understand this truth. But most people think it is not possible. "If we become friendly with each other, we will be lost. The only way is to have hard competition. If it is necessary, we should even fight or reject others' opinions. And we should stick to our own way." That is what we are doing, actually. Before you actually practice our way, you have this fear, but if you practice our way, there is no such problem at all, as you must have seen. If you have even the faintest idea of this truth, then it will be a great help for you, I think. Because you don't have this kind of idea, because you have never made this kind of effort, we are so unhappy. For a bodhisattva, to be unhappy is also good. For the usual person, to be unhappy is a terrible thing. I think we have already finished the most difficult part of this sutra. The next chapter will be the interesting one, maybe. So if you read it, you will be very interested in it, because it has this kind of understanding. It is called the chapter of "Good Devices" or "Skillful devices". In this sutra devices are more important than the First Principle. Usually people respect the First Principle rather than skillful devices. But in this Sutra, Buddha put emphasis on skillful devices instead. This means that Buddha put emphasis on mercy. The way to help people with skillful devices is the most important point. And to find each one's own position, responsibility, and meaning of life, and to find the joy of life in the activity near at hand, or the previous attainment, is the most important point.

Thank you very much for listening to my tedious lecture. If you have questions, please ask me. *Hai*.

Q: You were talking about Dogen Zenji's saying that eventually everyone will attain enlightenment. We hear the word "attain" often, but in chanting the *Shingyo* we say, "No attainment because of no attainment". I find myself clinging constantly to the idea of attaining something, or imagining that something is going to happen. It seems that what the sutra is saying, "no attainment", and what Dogen is saying, "Don't worry, because you will all attain enlightenment," are very different understandings.

SR: Yeah, very different. But when we say "attainment", the meaning is actually very different from the usual connotation of the word. By attainment we mean not even the result of practice, but that everything is attainment. What we see is attainment of something. If you say this is the result, that is the result. If you say this is the cause, that is the cause, you know. So even though I call it attainment, it may be the practice. We understand in that way. So we say "tongueless tongue, wordless word". Words beyond words. Somehow, we must say something. So, sometimes "attainment", sometimes "practice". That is our way. That is how you should listen to or read our scriptures. When we describe something, we should follow the logical sequence. That is one side of the practice. But Dogen Zenji says, "When one side is described, the other side is dark." We cannot describe both ways [at once]. That is why we describe just one side of the Truth. But if you have ears to listen to it, eyes to read it, you should be satisfied with one description, because you know there is the other side.

[Tape ends here.]

Transcribed and edited by by Brian Fikes.

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68-02-00G – no transcript. Maybe just Togen Sumi
