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NOT VERBATIM

Shunryū Suzuki-rōshi: We have here—we had here various names of bodhisattvas, and the next ones were the devas—devas, or gods, or supernatural beings. [Begins reading from *Lotus Sūtra*, Kern translation, p. 4, Line 18.]

—further Shakra, the ruler of the celestials, with twenty thousand—

—and others. Shakra, the ruler of the celestials. Shakra in *Rig Veda*'s time is not the name of this god. "Shakra" is the adjective as you say: "the strong." If you say "the strong" sometimes you mean strong one is just strong. Same thing with this god. Indra was the name of the god. "Shakra," the strong one, means Shakra the Indra. But at Buddha's time Shakra became the name of Indras, and here is the name of the god. Shakra the ruler, *deva*—devanan [?], Indra—the strong one, the ruler of the celestials. But here, Shakra is name. Celestials means Indras, many gods.

[Again reading from *Lotus Sutra*, p. 4, with frequent interjections]

—with twenty thousand gods, his followers, such as the god Kandra (the Moon).

God of the moon, deva of the moon;

—the *deva* of Surya (the Sun); the god of Samantaghanda (the Wind), the god Ratnaprabha—

Ratnaprabha I couldn't figure out who he was.

—the god Avabnasaprabha, [and others]; further, the four great rulers—

And so on to Vaisravaña. Those are the rulers or gods [the Four-Quarter Kinfs] who protect Buddhists in the four directions. The great ruler Virūpaksha—in Japanese, Kōmoku-ten. He is the ruler who lives —protector who lives in West [of Mount Sumeru]. The great ruler Dhritarāshtra lives—excuse—namely, the great ruler Virūdhaka—the first one [Virūdhaka] lives in the South. The next one, Virūpāksha, live in the West, the protector of the West. And the great ruler Dhritarāshtra is the protector who is on the North [East]. And the great ruler Vaishravana, who lives in the East [North]. This is

sometimes the order is not the same, but here, in this book, the order is South, East, West, and North. Sometimes East, South, West, North. This is more usual.

—the god Ishvara and the god Maheshvara—

Ishvara—Maheshvara—this is—in Japanese, they are Jizaiten or Daijizai-ten [Shiva]. Those are the gods who protect also Buddhists.

—each followed by thirty thousand gods; further, Brahma Sahāmpati—

Brahma Sahāmpati. *Saha* means *sava*. *Sava* means, in Japanese or Chinese, *Saba*. "Sahāmpati" is the "Lord of" or "Ruler of This World." Brahma is god of gods. "Brahma Sahāmpati" means Brahma, the "Lord of This World."

"... and his twenty [sutra says twelve] thousand followers," and the Brahma Kayika gods. (and so on to twelve thousand Brahmakayika gods). Brahmakayika ... *kakyika* means "world." Brahmakayika ... the god which belong to Brahma worlds, Kayika ... "Brahmakayika gods, amongst whom Brahma Sikhin ... " "Sikhin" is the name or a name of the Brahma.

"And Brahma Gyotishprabha, with the other twelve thousand Brahmakayika gods." Those are the gods who belong to Brahma's world. "... together with the eight Naga Kings ..." Naga Kings--eight Naga Kings is pretty famous gods. "And many hundred thousand myriads of Kotis of Nagas in their train." Naga is dragon. "Namely, the Naga King Nanda (and so on to) ... and Utpakala." Those are the eight Nagas, Dragons. "... further, the four Kinnara Kings (and so on to) ... of followers." Kinnara is "*kin*" is "what," "*Nara*" is "man." Man or what? (laughs) kinnara, man or what? He was, you know, his legs, it is animal and his body is ... his head is man, with horns, here. So, (laughs) man or what? That is his name, Kinnara. And he is good. He is a kind of musician, and people like him very much, because of his music. Man or what? Is his name, Kinnara.

"... Many hundred thousand myriads of kotis of followers (and so on to) ... the Kinnara King Dharmadhara." The first one, Kind Druma, his name means "King who respects Dharma." Kinnara King Drama. The Canary King Monothermia, "The King of the Great Dharma," Mahadhrama, the King Saddharma Pundarika, you know, "Highest, Greatest Dharma." And the Canary King Dharmadhara. Dharmadara means to hold, or to protect, or to obtain. The Canary who obtains or who protects the Dharma.

"... Besides, the four divine beings called Gandharvakayikas."

Gandharvakayikas is in Chinese or Japanese Kendachiwa [?] (Kendattiwa?). God, Kendachiwa (Kendattiwa?) ... divine being, god Kendachiwa [?]. "With many hundred thousand Gandharvas in their following, namely (and so on to) ... and the Gandharva Madhurasvara." Those are the gods who has ... who is charming, and who likes girls. You know, who loves girls, and who gave (gives) people joy. The first one is ... Manogna is the joy or tenderness, god of Tenderness. And the Gandharva Manognasvara is the god of the Sun. Gandharva Madhura is the god of Sweetness. And the god of ... Madhurasvara, he is also the god of Suns.

"Further, the four chiefs of the demons followed by (and so on to) ... of Kotis of Garudas. Uasha, Asura, he belongs to one of the six reincarnations, reincarnated worlds. You know: celestial world and human worlds and hell and hungry ghost world and animal and Asura world. This is the kind of world where human beings are incarnated. Human beings actually ... we have actually ... we are actually sometimes celestial, like celestial beings, like human beings, like animals, like Asura. Asura maybe the state of our mind where, because we have two nature: one is animal nature or good nature, the other is bad nature. And within ourselves always fighting ... the good nature is always fighting the bad nature. That is our problem. So before Buddhists, before Buddhism, there were evil natured kings, gods, who were fighting always with the gods ... gods who have good nature.

[End of Side A. Some text lost.]

... were the god who was fighting. Buddhists understand this god as a reincarnation ... reincarnated world for human beings. So it means that the state of mind we will actually, even in this life.

So those gods is rather more subjective gods than objective beings, which is always fighting with good nature gods.

And the four garuda gods follow.

—Garuda chiefs followed by many (and so on to) ... the son of Vaidehi.

The King of Agantasatru, this is an historical person, not a god. Here we have Bodhisattvas and sixteen laymen Bodhisattvas and celestial beings like devas; and many spirits, good and bad. And the last one, as a human being, is Bimbisara's son, or princess, Ajatasattu ... (Bimbisara = Vaidehi [?]). "Ajatasattu, King of Magadha, the son of Vaidehi." I think I told you about him already. Bimbisara who did not have his successor, he didn't have for a long time his princess or successor: so he asked some fortune teller about his prince; and the

fortune teller said, "He is in the mountain ... still ... you will have your successor, but he is now a hermit in the mountains, and he will be, after his death, in his future life your successor."

So he kills him, so that he can have his next life earlier, he kills him. (Laughs). Do you remember? But at the same time he is reincarnated as his prince. And he asked again the fortune teller about him. And he said, "You killed him, so I am afraid he will kill you." So he was very much afraid of his _____ and he tried to kill him before he ... the boy kill the king. But ... the king threw him or tossed him from the Nion Pagoda, but he couldn't kill him. But he was injured--just his toe was injured. So he now ... the king now, treated him very well so that he will not have any bad feelings with the king. But when he became king he try to killed ... he tried to kill the king. He put the king in prison and his wife protected him in various ways. Sometimes she went ... she saw the king with honey, with honey painted in her body ... whole body. [Laughs] And he _____ king to lick the honey from her body. But at last [his?] King passed away in that prison. And Agatasatru became the king of the country, Magadha. And Iitaike [?] or Vaidrehi [?] ... Vaidrehi is the mother of Ajatasattu. And Ajatasattu became Buddha's follower later. He was very ... he became very resentful of what he did and he became Buddha's follower. This is Ajatasattu, the kind of Magadha ... the son of Vaidehi.

[Continues with *Lotus Sūtra* p. 6, Line 9]: "Now at that time ... the exposition of Infinity." And so many human beings and various spirits and gods attended ... came to the castle ... not castle, but Ragagriha, city of Ragagriha ... where Buddha was and he was surrounded by those people. Four people, (classes of hearers?) ... four people means lay Buddhists ... man and woman ... and nuns and monks. Those are the four classes of hearers.

"... Honored, revered, venerated, worshipped by the four classes of hearers." "Worshipped," it says, but means that--"served" is more appropriate. "Venerated and served," "*Kuiyo* [?]" ... this word is very big word. Worship. In *Shōbōgenzō*—only—this term is explained—what is *kuiyo*. It was very deep and wide in meaning.

"Venerated," worshiped by the four classes of hearers ... after expounding the Dharmaparyaya ... the Supreme teaching ... means Dharmaparyaya ... called the "great exposition." "Dharmaparyaya and great exposition" in Chinese is in apposition: "Dharmaparyaya, the great exposition." But here it says: "Dharmaparyaya called ... the great exposition." I don't know which is correct. The text of great ... this is, you know, adjective for the Supreme Teaching. Or ... great Exposition means Great Vehicle. The Supreme Teaching is called the Great Vehicle or Great Teaching, Great Exposition.

"A test of Great Development," this is an adjective for the Dharmaparyaya or Supreme Teaching. "The Great Development serving to instruct Bodhisattvas ... serving to instruct Bodhisattvas and proper to all Buddhas." Obtained by all Bodhisattvas ... the teaching ... Bodhisattvas obtain—means: teaching which Bodhisattvas have, keep, always in their mind. Proper to all Buddhas.

"... sat cross-legged on the seat of the Law (and so on to) ... exposition of Infinity." The *dhyana* [?] of Infinity, Infinite meaning. And "his body was motionless (and so on to) ... tossed ... tossed along." This is how it was moved.

"... as soon as the Lord had entered upon his meditation; there fell a great rain of divine flowers." This is ... some ... you know, important event happened, when he ... before he started to give this sutra. "As soon as (and so on to) ... great Mangushakas" "I don't know what flowers actually they are. But in Japan, Mangushaka means, you know, a kind of flower which comes out in Spring and Autumn. It is, you know, you don't have that flower in ... I haven't see Mangushaka in America. It is something like Daffodils, but it is red. A kind of bulb [?], you know, which comes out in Spring and it comes out twice, Spring and Autumn.

Those flowers fell and covered the Lord and the four classes of hearers who were at ... who where there. "And the whole Buddha field shook in six ways." There are many interpretations for what the six ways of shaking (means). This is one of the interpretations: "It moved ... removed, trembled from one end to the other ... tossed along." This is a mixture of many kinds of interpretations of how it trembles. But, it means, anyway: "how it shook." Some explanation is to shook, you know, if this is "world" (gesturing with hands) ... middle part comes up and four corners come out, later, this way (gesture) and some explanation ... and this one ... and four corners of it, you know, move. But this is four ... four ways. And some explained: Here ... removed ... trembled ... removed ... (some false starts on a new explanation [?]) "... moved ... moved strongly and ... moved ... and moved strongly ... and removed ... and removed strongly ... trembles ... trembled strongly. It will make six. "From one end to the other, tossed ... tossed along."

There is many interpretations, anyway, page after page. But it means to ... "something extraordinary." The people who attended there had some extraordinary feeling when he was expected, Buddha ... to tell some important teaching.

Student A: Rōshi, I don't understand reincarnation at all. Are people really reborn? And if they are, who or what is reborn? And how does that happen?

Suzuki-rōshi: Reincarnation? Actually, Buddhists ... most Buddhists believe in reincarnation. Actually, you know, it means reincarnated ... means ... next life. Some other being, like animals, if you do not behave. [Laughs.]

Student ____: If what?

Student B: If you don't "behave."

Student A: If you don't behave ... what if you *do* behave?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student A: What if you *do* behave?

Suzuki-rōshi: If you behave like an animal, next life you will be animal.

Student A: Well now?

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student A: Yeah, I mean ... what is it that is reborn?

Suzuki-rōshi: I don't know. [Laughter]

Student A: Is there something, you know, something about you that continues? Or ...

Suzuki-rōshi: Hmm?

Student A: Is there something, you know, something inside of me, say, that continues ... and gets reborn somehow? I read a book ... a thing that Yasutani-rōshi wrote about this little thing that kind of floats around. You know, has ... eats perfume and ... and it finds appropriate parents for it ... and then it is reborn. But it ... it was like a thing. Something. I don't know what to call it. Is that what it is like? [Laughter throughout much of this.]

Suzuki-rōshi: I don't know. I am not so sure.

Student B: Rōshi, I don't know about reincarnation, but I have read Buddhist things on reincarnation that say there is no person reborn, but there are no actor reborn, but the acts continue ... and it seems to me that you could just as easily say as "Who is being reborn now?" As you can say "Who will be reborn later?" We don't understand. What is happening now is no more miraculous, I think, than some continuation

of whatever is happening. But do you see what I mean?

Suzuki-rōshi: *Mmm.* [Laughter] I am not ... I cannot explain it, you know, satisfactorily. I studied from many teachers, but it was pretty difficult to understand.

Student B: You have no opinion?

Suzuki-rōshi: No. I have many opinions. [Laughter.]

This transcript is a retyping of the existing City Center transcript. It is not verbatim. The City Center transcript was entered onto disk by Jose Escobar, 1997. It was reformatted by Bill Redican (7/17/01).